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Memorials of Early Genius, and Achievements in the Pursuit of Knowledge

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THE ITALIAN PAINTER

The young peasant was drawing with a piece of chalk on a smooth stone a picture of one of his flock who reposed at a little distance

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Memorials of Early Genius

T. G. Flowers

That wondrous force of thought which mounting spurns
This dusky spot and measures all the sky

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MEMORIALS

OF

EARLY GENIUS,

AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN

The Pursuit of Knowledge.

"We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause
Even to the death; else wherefore should the eve
Of man converse with immortality."

WORDSWORTH.

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PREFACE.

THE varied examples which the following narratives of the victories of Early Genius exhibit, afford evidence, no less of the still higher worth of moral excellence, and the power of that Divine teaching which the Gospel alone affords. Without its sanctifying influence, even the genius of Chatterton, and the gentle and loveable character of Shelley, prove all in vain as means for attaining the lofty station which their great gifts seemed to promise in their dawn; while in Milton and Newton we behold the greatest intellects that ever elevated man above his species bowing down with reverent humility before the far higher truths which the word of God reveals.

As examples of genius thus dignified by Christianity, and accomplishing success only by exertions adequate to the worth of their high aim, these biographical sketches are offered to the reader. In the examples they afford, he will find a stimulus to honourable exertion; while they prove how arduous have been the struggles by which even the most gifted have attained to imperishable honours, and noble rewards.

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THE PHILOSOPHIC SPIRIT.

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MEMORIALS OF EARLY GENIUS.

THE PHILOSOPHIC SPIRIT.

"Has not God
Still wrought by means since first he made the world?
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means
Form'd for his use, and ready at his will?"

CHAPTER I.

ROGER BACON.

PHILOSOPHY, which, literally rendered, signifies the love of truth, has come, through the influence of a widely prevalent scepticism at the era of the French Revolution, to be regarded by many as so far inimical to truth, that the Philosophic Spirit has been frequently made use of as a term synonymous with the essential source of infidelity. The spirit of inquiry, however, so thoroughly harmonizes with the constitution of our moral nature, that the most violent prejudices can only temporarily retard its progress, though

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they have not always been ineffectual in diverting it from the right path. It is a curious feature in the history of both mental and physical sciences, that nearly all their first steps have been made to appear as opposed to revealed truth, and the philosopher has been compelled to meet the divine as a jealous and intolerant opponent. That this has originated frequently in the avowed infidelity of the philosopher cannot be questioned, yet it has far oftener been caused by the narrow-minded dogmatism of the theologian, who refused to submit the arguments of his opponents to the test of inquiry. Voltaire and other philosophers of the French school, ignorant of any other Christianity than the corrupt system of popery that arrogated the exclusive right to that title in their unhappy country, fondly flattered themselves that their teaching had already given the death-blow to that long-enduring superstition. Christianity, however, which is the highest embodyment of Divine truth, has nothing to fear from the most rigorous investigation of all subordinate truths. Bacon discussed the system of Aristotle in the spirit of honest philosophical inquiry, and was denounced by the monks of the thirteenth century as a heretic. Galileo proclaimed to the theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that the earth revolved round the sun, and was condemned as a daring atheist, who defied alike the voice of the church, and the truth of the Bible. We smile now at the history of such futile bigotry; yet the same spirit has been manifested no less strongly in our own day, where even the most reverent inquirers into the great truths of nature, have been challenged by the misdirected zeal of the champions of revelation, who would compel the uninstructed multitude to believe that the Word of God is irreconcilable with the discoveries of science. In all this the philosopher has generally been far less to blame than the theologian. The former might justly ask the latter if he

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really believes in the divine origin of the Bible, that he so timidly guards its declarations from investigation. It is the true spirit of Protestantism to encourage the utmost investigation of its dogmas. It has nothing to fear even from the perverted labours of the sceptic, far less from the honest inquiries of the philosopher. We may rest assured that the book of Nature cannot ultimately contradict the book of Revelation, for the author of both is the same; and the same spirit of reverent and teachable investigation should guide us in the perusal of the one as of the other. In this spirit it was that the greatest of all philosophers, Newton, disclosed the secret springs that guide the vast universe in all the complex motions of the spheres; learning at every step to view with deeper reverence and holy awe the Creator and Sustainer of all things: The great God, the first cause from whence all secondary causes and all natural laws proceed.

Such was the principle that actuated the great Christian philosopher, and in the same spirit the Christian poet writes—

> Happy the man, who sees a God employed
> In all the good and ill that checker life!
> Resolving all events, with their effects
> And manifold results, into the will
> And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
> Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
> The least of our concerns (since from the least
> The greatest oft originate;) could chance
> Find place in his dominion, or dispose
> One lawless particle to thwart his plan;
> Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
> Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
> The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
> This truth Philosophy, though eagle-eyed
> In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;
> And, having found his instrument, forgets,
> Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,
> Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims
> His hot displeasure against foolish men,
> That live an atheist life: involves the Heavens

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In tempests; quits his grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury; bids the plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
And putrefy the breath of blooming Health.
He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.
Forth steps the spruce Philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs
And principles; of causes, how they work
By necessary laws their sure effects;
Of action and reaction: he has found
The source of the disease, that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
Thou fool, will thy discovery of the cause
Suspend th' effect, or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means since first he made the world?
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means
Form'd for his use, and ready at his will?
Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve; ask of him,
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught;
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all."

Popular superstition and vulgar prejudice have continued even to our own day to associate the name of Roger Bacon, one of the greatest of English philosophers, with the puerile conceptions of scientific inquiry that prevailed in his own day. "The learned monk," says one of his biographers, "searching for the philosopher's stone in his laboratory, aided only by infernal spirits, was substituted for the sagacious advocate of reform in education, reading, and reasoning; and—what was equally rare—the real inquirer into the phenomena of nature."

Roger Bacon was born near Ilchester in Somersetshire, about the year 1214. Wonderfully little is known of the early history of this eminent man, who stood foremost among English philosophers until the appearance of his great namesake in the seventeenth century. His father seems to have been a comfortable English yeoman,

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and by him his son was sent to Oxford to acquire that learning for which we may presume the young student early manifested a strong desire. After residing there for a time, he proceeded to Paris according to the usual custom of that period, the university of Paris being then considered the chief seat of learning in the world. The theology of that day was altogether opposed to the Philosophical Spirit. A few years before the birth of Bacon, a council at Paris condemned and burnt the works of Aristotle as they then existed in the mutilated translations from eastern versions of the original. Towards the middle of the thirteenth century, the philosophy of Aristotle found many zealous, but not very wise maintainers. Some of the most active religious orders of the Romish church espoused the cause, and arrogated to him the exclusive title of "the Philosopher." 'Bacon," says one of his biographers, "in no sense became an Aristotelian, except in that which comprehends all who are acquainted with the opinions and methods of the Greek philosopher. Better versed in the original than most of his contemporaries, he freely criticises all he meets with, (especially the merit of the translations, all which he says he would burn, if he could,) and is himself an early and sufficient proof that the absurdities of his contemporaries ought not to be called 'Aristotelian,' any more than Aristotle himself 'the Philosopher.' Bacon could read Aristotle without danger of falling into idolatry: his antagonists could have erected a system of verbal disputes upon the *Principia* of Newton, if they had possessed it."

From Paris Bacon returned to Oxford with a doctor's degree from the former University, and soon after he took on him the vows of a Franciscan, which bound him to poverty, manual labour, and study. The manual labour, however, which he practised, was probably comprised in the use of his pen, and the researches of the laboratory, and we have good reason for believing that

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the vow of poverty was still less attended to, as he tells us himself that in the course of twenty years he expended 2000 livres on books and instruments; an outlay amounting to a very considerable sum of money in those days. The labours of Bacon, and the opinions which he advocated, speedily won for him the enmity of the monks of Oxford, and he found the obstinate ignorance and bigotry of his contemporaries far more insufferable obstacles to his scientific inquiries than all the difficulties which beset him in the laboratory. His biographer remarks—"The enmity of his brethren soon began to show itself: the lectures which he gave in the University were prohibited, as well as the transmission of any of his writings beyond the walls of his convent. The charge made against him was that of magic, which was then frequently brought against those who studied the sciences, and particularly chemistry. The ignorance of the clergy of that time as to mathematics or physics was afterwards described by Anthony-a-Wood, who says that they knew no property of the circle except that of keeping out the devil, and thought the points of a triangle would wound religion. Brought up to consider philosophy as nearly allied to, if not identical with, heresy itself, many of them might perhaps be honest believers in its magical power; but we can hardly doubt that there were a few more acute minds, who saw that Roger Bacon was in reality endeavouring to evoke a spirit whose influence would upset the power they had acquired over the thoughts of men, and allow them to read and reflect, without fear of excommunication, or the necessity of inquiring what council had authorised the book. The following detached passages of the *Opus Majus* no doubt contain opinions which its author was in the habit of expressing:—

'Most students have no worthy exercise for their heads, and therefore languish and stupify upon bad translations, which lose them both time and money. Ap-

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pearances alone rule them, and they care not what they know, but what they are thought to know by a senseless multitude. There are four principal stumbling-blocks in the way of arriving at knowledge—authority, habit, appearances as they present themselves to the vulgar eye, and concealment of ignorance combined with ostentation of knowledge. Even if the first three could be got over by some great effort of reason, the fourth remains ready. Men presume to teach before they have learnt, and fall into so many errors, that the idle think themselves happy in comparison—and hence both in science and in common life we see a thousand falsehoods for one truth. And this being the case, we must not stick to what we hear and read, but must examine most strictly the opinions of our ancestors, that we may add what is lacking, and correct what is erroneous, but with all modesty and allowance. We must, with all our strength, prefer reason to custom, and the opinions of the wise and good to the perceptions of the vulgar: and we must not use the triple argument; that is to say, this has been laid down, this has been usual, this has been common, therefore it is to be held by. For the very opposite conclusion does much better follow from the premises. And though the whole world be possessed by these causes of error, let us freely hear opinions contrary to established usage.'"

The *Opus Majus*, from which this passage is extracted, owes, no doubt, much of its peculiar form to the circumstances under which it was produced. The enmity and bigoted opposition of the Franciscans had completely debarred him from publishing his discoveries, or even, as it would seem, reducing them to an accessible form in writing. In the year 1265, Clement IV. ascended the Papal throne. He was a native of St. Gilles in Languedoc, and while holding the rank of Cardinal Bishop of Sabina, had filled the office of Legate in England. There he learned of Bacon's wonderful discoveries, but was de-

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barred by the jealousy and ignorance of the order to which the learned friar belonged, from making himself fully acquainted with them. It is not certain whether any interview took place between Bacon and the Papal Legate while in England, but at any rate his wish to be made acquainted with the discoveries of the great English philosopher had been communicated to the latter, and it no doubt afforded him consolation, in the midst of the persecution he was subjected to by ignorance and bigotry, to obtain such marks of sympathy from one who was himself an able scholar and an eminent dignitary of the Church. We find accordingly, that so soon as Bacon learned that the Bishop of Sabina had been elected head of the Church, he availed himself of the known sympathy of the Pope with his pursuits, to free himself from the trammels to which he had been so long subjected. Bacon in this manifested a degree of courage and independence not easily appreciable now; for, setting aside the injunctions of his superiors, and without affording them any opportunity of challenging his conduct, he wrote to Clement IV., reminding him of the wish he had expressed to see a written treatise of his philosophical opinions, and the discoveries he had made. To this he speedily received a reply, renewing the former request, and requiring him to draw up his work in all haste, and forward it to him, whatever might be the commands of his superiors, or the nature of the vows by which he had bound himself on entering his order. Bacon would appear to have availed himself of this opportunity of communicating with the Pope, to try to enlist his powerful interest on his behalf, and thereby secure his escape from the ignorant and bigoted thraldom to which he was subjected. The letter was no doubt forwarded with the utmost secrecy, and the Pope, in his reply, requires him to point out, with similar caution, by what means he can best promote his liberation.

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The work which is known as Bacon's *Opus Majus*, was forwarded to Rome, by the hands of John of London, a favourite pupil of the philosopher, within two years after the accession of Clement IV. to the Popedom. Doubtless the learned monk joyfully anticipated the accomplishment of all his wishes, by securing the patronage of the head of the Church; and he evidently drew it up with the most prudential care, so as to avoid any expression of sentiments likely to awaken the jealously of the Church. To this we must mainly ascribe that peculiar character alluded to in the following remarks:—"The charge of heresy appears to be by no means so well founded as a Protestant would wish. Throughout the whole of his writings Bacon is a strict Roman Catholic, that is, he expressly submits matters of opinion to the authority of the Church, saying that if the respect due to the vicar of the Saviour, 'vicarius Salvatoris,' alone, and the benefit of the world, could be consulted in any other way than by the progress of philosophy, he would not, under such impediments as lay in his way, proceed with his undertaking for the whole Church of God, however much it might entreat or insist. His zeal for Christianity, in its Latin or western form, breaks out in every page; and all science is considered with direct reference to theology, and not otherwise. But at the same time, to the credit of his principles, considering the book-burning, heretic-hunting age in which he lived, there is not a word of any other force except that of persuasion. He takes care to have both authority and reason for every proposition that he advances; perhaps, indeed, he might have experienced forbearance at the hand of those who were his persecutors, had he not so clearly made out prophets, apostles, and fathers to have been partakers of his opinions. 'But let not your Serenity imagine,' he says, 'that I intend to excite the *clemency* of your Holiness, in order that the papal majesty should employ force against weak authors

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and the multitude, or that my unworthy self should raise any stumblingblock to study.' Indeed the whole scope of the first part of the work is to prove, from authority and from reason, that philosophy and Christianity cannot disagree; a sentiment altogether of his own revival, in an age in which all philosophers, and mathematicians in particular, were considered as at best of dubious orthodoxy."

Unhappily however for Bacon, his powerful patron died ere he could interpose in his behalf. Nothing certain is known as to the reception his work met with at the papal court. Some writers have affirmed that it received the highest approbation of the Pope, which he testified by extending his patronage to the bearer; while others have insinuated that he lent the sanction of his authority to his enemies, who had already assailed him as a heretic. There is every reason to believe, however, that the Pope had scarcely time to have made himself acquainted with the contents of the *Opus Majus*, ere he was seized with his last illness. There is something exceedingly painful in the history of those great teachers of mankind who have thus had to struggle with the folly and the malevolence of an ignorant generation for permission to accomplish a task pregnant with blessings to their own and other times; and the case was one of slender hope indeed which in the thirteenth century depended on the liberality of a Pope to counteract the intolerance of the Church.

CHAPTER II.

ASTROLOGY.

THE death of Clement overthrew all the bright hopes which had cheered the philosopher in his cell. The

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great and good Robert Grosteste, Bishop of Lincoln, who has been termed the moral light, as Bacon was the intel lectual light, of that age, was an early friend of the philosopher, and one of the very few of his contemporaries who could understand and sympathize in his pursuits. Bacon speaks of him and of his friend Adam de Morisco, as students standing apart from the herd, and penetrating the mazes of things. De Morisco, like Bacon, had taken the habit of a friar, and experienced his share of the restraints of the cloister, though known by the title of the "Illustrious Doctor." In the year 1234, we find Friar Bacon, conjoined with Robert Grosteste, in the execution of a royal ordinance for the better regulation of the University of Oxford. But the good bishop died in 1253, long before Bacon had rejoiced in that bright but transitory gleam of better fortune, which was followed by deeper shadows clouding his path.

The death of Clement extinguished his hopes, but he was allowed to remain free from open persecution for some years thereafter. It was not till the year 1278 that the appointment of Jerome of Ascoli, the general of the Franciscan order, to act as the Legate of the Pope, Nicholas III., at the Court of France, inspired the English Franciscans with courage to renew their attack on the great philosopher.

"Bacon, then sixty-four years old, was accordingly summoned to Paris, (Dr. Jebb implies that he had already removed his residence there to another convent of his order,) where a council of Franciscans, with Jerome at their head, condemned his writings, and committed him to close confinement. According to Bale, or Balæus, (cited by Dr. Jebb,) the charge of innovation was the pretext, but of what kind was not specified: according to others, the writings of Bacon upon astrology were the particular ground of accusation. We cannot learn that any offer of pardon was made to the accused upon his

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recantation of the obnoxious opinions, as usual in such cases; which, if we may judge from the *Opus Majus*, Bacon would have conceived himself bound to accept, at least if he recognised the legality of the tribunal. A confirmation of the proceeding was immediately obtained from the court of Rome. During ten years, every effort made by him to procure his enlargement was without success. The two succeeding pontiffs had short and busy reigns; but on the accession of Jerome, (Nicholas IV.,) Bacon once more tried to attract notice. He sent to that pope, it is said, a treatise on the method of retarding the infirmities of old age, the only consequence of which was increased rigour and closer confinement. But that which was not to be obtained from the justice of the Pope, was conceded to private interest, and Bacon was at last restored to liberty by the intercession of some powerful nobles, but who they were is not mentioned. Some say he died in prison; but the best authorities unite in stating that he returned to Oxford, where he wrote a compendium of theology, and died some months, or perhaps a year and a half, after Nicholas IV., who died April 1292."

The great points by which Bacon is popularly known are the discovery of gunpowder, and the conception of the telescope, afterwards realized to such wondrous purpose in the hands of his great successor, Galileo. To these, however, the credulity of his contemporaries, and the exaggerations of popular ignorance, have added numerous strange and extravagant fables, so that the fame of the illustrious English philosopher has well nigh disappeared amid the accumulation of childish conceits with which the name of Friar Bacon is associated.'

It is curious to find how vulgar wonder thus overloads the names of the world's greatest benefactors. The old English poet, Gower, has embodied some of the popular legends of his time, in which the wonders that have been more generally ascribed to Bacon are told as the deeds

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of the great scholar and patriot, Bishop Grosteste. Thus, in one of his tales, he remarks,—

> "For of the great clerke, Grosteste,
> I read how ready that he was,
> By his learning, a head of brass
> To make, and forge it for to tell
> Of such things as befell."

Our juvenile readers are no doubt familiar with the old legend which represents Friar Bacon pondering by his magical art to strengthen England against her foes. He resolved to surround the whole island with impregnable walls of brass, and, having for this purpose constructed his magical Head of Brass, he awaited with patience in expectation of its uttering the words of wisdom that were to reveal to him the means of accomplishing his patriotic intentions. Time passed on, however, and the brazen head maintained unbroken silence, till at length the philosopher and magician, exhausted with his fruitless vigils, withdrew to his cell for needful repose, leaving one of his pupils to watch the mysterious head, and summon him on the slightest appearance of intending speech. The new watcher was rewarded after a time by the head uttering these brief words: "TIME IS!" "If that is all it has to say," thought the pupil, "it were a pity to disturb the Friar from his slumbers." He accordingly continued his vigils, and after another solemn pause, the head again spoke with equal brevity: "TIME WAS!" This, however, seemed to the pupil fully as trifling an attempt at speech as the former, and so he left his master to sleep on, until he was awoke by the astounding crash, as the head closed its oracular utterances by exclaiming "TIME IS PAST!" and then shivering into atoms; "and so," says the old nursery-tale, "Friar Bacon missed the opportunity of surrounding England with walls of brass." The tale most probably originated in some allegorical allusion,

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possibly to his great discovery of gunpowder, which, with the brazen guns, manned by her invincible seamen, has effectually accomplished the object the Friar is said to have aimed at.

Friar Bacon appears not only to have been a man altogether beyond his own age, but one of those great geniuses who seem to anticipate the discoveries of future ages, and leaves nothing new for after-times. It is an astonishing proof of the necessity of civilization being far advanced before nations can ever avail themselves of the discoveries of genius. Bacon appears to have anticipated even some of the greatest men of the nineteenth century in important discoveries in science; yet it required their re-discovery by later ages, to appreciate their worth. To the men of the thirteenth century the telescope was scarcely more available than the discovery of the art of printing would be to a nation of savages who had yet to learn the meaning of a written language. The influence of Bacon, however, was doubtless considerable, even on the ages immediately succeeding his own time. To us his life is pregnant with further evidence of the enmity of superstition and Romish intolerance, to all the noblest interests of man. It teaches us the value of perfect toleration for the freest inquiry into the great secrets of nature, and while we endeavour in our search after these great truths ever to do it in a reverent spirit, and with a child-like confidence in the infallible teachings of Revelation; it also warns us to beware of rashly mistaking the conclusions we may draw from Scripture as themselves infallible. This it is that has led even honest, though mistaken men, hastily to pronounce the philosopher a heretic, who makes known to us some great truth of nature; startling, and therefore suspicious from its novelty.

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CHAPTER III.

GALILEO.

SIMILAR in fate to the great English philosopher is the noble Tuscan, who first discovered for us "the magic tube," devised long before in the Franciscan's cell, and experienced the same rewards for the wondrous truths he revealed to man, as had been accorded to Bacon by the intolerance of his contemporaries. Strange indeed must it seem to the intelligent student of nature, that he who in so marvellous a manner taught us anew that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work," should have been doomed to the dungeons of the Roman Inquisition, as a heretic who contravened the truths of Revelation.

Galileo was the son of Vincentio Galilei, a noble Florentine, who distinguished himself by his scientific knowledge and study of music, and by the great learning and erudition he displayed in maintaining his views. His chief work, entitled "A Discourse on the Music of the Ancients and Moderns," was printed in a large folio volume at Florence, in 1581, and has supplied a store of criticism and research for successive historians of the musical art.

Vincentio Galilei shared in the vicissitudes that have marked the nurture of so many of the gifted sons of Florence, and on the 15th of February, 1564, his son Galileo was born at Pisa. The youth of the great Tuscan philosopher was passed amid many hardships, schooling him into the hardy pursuit of his great future work, by the difficulties he had to encounter in acquiring the rudiments of learning. At the age of nineteen he was placed by his father at the University

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of Pisa, where he speedily manifested the peculiar bent of his mind for research, and distinguished himself by his extraordinary powers of application. The first work by Galileo that excited notice, and evinced the possession of that originality of thought and spirit of philosophic observation which afterwards produced such wonderful results, was an essay on the Hydrostatic Balance. The young student had been designed by his father for the medical profession, but he soon showed an extreme unwillingness to tie himself down to the formal and petty routine of duties required by that valuable but engrossing profession. Fortunately his essay on the hydrostatic balance attracted the notice of Guido Ubaldi, a learned Pisan, who at once perceived the acute powers of reasoning and the unwonted spirit of philosophic investigation which was displayed in it. Ubaldi cultivated the acquaintance of the ingenious scholar, and by his counsel and example assisted him in choosing the course of study most likely to forward him in the development of those great powers of mind that he had already proved himself to possess. Under his auspices the study of medicine was abandoned, and his attention was thereafter almost exclusively fixed on geometry and experimental philosophy. Vincentio Galilei had watched with pleasure the early development of his great powers of mind, and in selecting for him the medical profession, had been guided by a reasonable prudence and foresight, which led him to anticipate that it would prove the ready path to success and worldly prosperity. It was not, therefore, without regret, as well as considerable opposition, that he was prevailed on to sanction the abandonment of the lucrative profession of medicine for those higher walks of science that promised at best only a very precarious and stinted reward. The elder Galilei, however, was reluctantly turned from his own schemes of worldly aggrandizement for his son by the decided bent which

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the latter displayed for those abstruse walks of science on which he had thus early entered Thenceforth Galileo entered on that important career which he was to pursue with such untiring zeal, and such wondrous results for all future times, through the years of a long life of unusual health and vigour.

The history of nearly all great discoverers exhibits the most wonderful results originating from the most insignificant means; and, in this respect, one of Galileo's earliest advances on the science of his age was apparently occasioned by his observation of what appears a trifling occurrence. One of the most remarkable buildings throughout the whole Italian peninsula is the Cathedral of Pisa, with its famous Campo Santo, adorned with some of the most singular and interesting specimens of early Art, and its baptistry and belfry, all grouping together within the wide open area at the western extremity of the town. The Duomo or Cathedral of Pisa was begun in the eleventh century, and completed during the great era of the revival of Italian Art. Statues and sculptures, paintings, carvings, and Mosaics, all unite to enrich its magnificent interior, and to associate with it such great names as Andrea del Sarto, Salvator Rosa, Giovanni da Bologna, Nicolo Pisano, and the like men of note at that interesting period. But the simple incident that associates with it the name of the great Tuscan philosopher surpasses in interest all that we attach to the gorgeous works of these masters of painting and sculpture. Walking in the aisle of this splendid Cathedral, Galileo was struck by observing the oscillation of one of the great lamps that hung suspended from the lofty ceiling. Thousands before had seen the same phenomenon and passed on, without thinking that so trifling an incident could be worth a moment's notice. To Galileo, however, it was like the apple whose fall is said to have suggested to the mind of Newton the mighty law that guides revolving

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worlds. He drew from it the hitherto unknown law of oscillation,—a fragment of that universal principle reserved for Newton to discover,—by which a simple pendulum sustained by a fixed point moves by regular vibrations, and has thus been made available for the measurement of time. The results of these observations of Galileo, however, derive far greater value from their effect on his own mind, than even from the useful purposes to which they have since been applied. The first use to which he applied his observation of the equality, or near equality, of the time of vibration of a pendulum, according to its less or greater length, was to the practical aid of medicine, by enabling the physician to apply it in the same way for testing the state of a patient's pulse, as has since been done by means of a watch with its second hand. It led him on to other inquiries, and meanwhile served to confirm the high anticipations that had been already formed of his future greatness.

Guido Ubaldi, the learned Pisan, who had been the first to recognize the high gifts of the youthful Galileo, continued to manifest the same generous interest in his progress. By the exertions of Ubaldi on his behalf, he was introduced to the Grand Duke Ferdinand I. de' Medici, by whom he was appointed, in 1589, to the chair of mathematics at Pisa. The emoluments of this appointment were not great, but the duties which thereby devolved on him were altogether congenial to his tastes and previous studies, and he availed himself of the leisure it afforded him to carry on a series of experiments on motion, which, now that he understood all the great, and then undiscovered, truths involved in them, assume a singular interest when we consider this early investigation of them. Much of their influence, like that of his previous observations on oscillation, derive their chief value from the indirect effects that resulted from them. He perceived that nearly all the scholastic dogmas by which

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the world had been content to be satisfied for centuries, were wholly untenable, and that laws had been assumed as those which guided the natural principles of motion, which proved, on examination, to be utterly false. Already had Copernicus challenged the established opinions of all men, and denied that our little globe of earth was the one unmoving centre round which the inconceivably vast sphere of the fixed stars daily revolved. Copernicus, however, had guarded the promulgation of his great discoveries by the most cautious and modest assumption of mere hypothetical inquiry; and, countenanced as he was by some of the most influential leaders in the Church of Rome, he escaped the charge of heresy, while at the same time he produced a general spirit of inquiry which was slowly preparing men's minds for the reception of the truth. Galileo was among the first to free himself from the slavish fetters of authority and received opinions. He set himself to investigate the arguments on which the old and complex Ptolemaic system was based, and speedily found that its infinite series of vast crystalline spheres, whose ever-moving interchange of melody,—produced by a cumbrous machinery of cycles and epicycles, excentrics and primum mobile,—instead of resulting in "*the Music of the Spheres*," was no better than a jangling tissue of absurdity, when tested by such laws of nature as were already understood.

The system on which the natural philosophy of the schoolmen was based, was indeed one well calculated to excite the astonishment and contempt of a calm philosophic inquirer. But it was on that very account all the more dangerous to assail it. The simplicity of the Copernican system, when brought into comparison with it, soon won the favour of those who were capable of appreciating the proofs that speedily appeared of it, greater accordance with known phenomena. Galileo, says a recent writer, "soon discovered and proved the futile nature of

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the objections then usually made against it, which were founded on a complete ignorance of the laws of mechanics, or on some misapplied quotations from Aristotle, the Bible, and the Fathers; and having also observed, that many who had at first believed the former system, had changed in favour of the latter, while none of those attached to the latter changed to the Ptolemaic hypothesis —that the former required almost daily some new emendation, some additional chrystalline sphere, to accommodate itself to the varying aspects of the celestial phenomena—that the appearance and disappearance of new stars contradicted the pretended incorruptibility of the heavenly bodies, together with other reflections which he has collected in his dialogues,—he became a convert to the Copernican system, and, in his old age, its most conspicuous martyr. So strong, however, were the religious prejudices on the subject of the quiescence of the earth, that Galileo thought it prudent to continue to lecture on the hypothesis of Ptolemy, until time should afford a favourable opportunity to destroy the visionary fabric by incontestable facts."

Galileo was only in his twenty-fifth year when he obtained the Chair of Mathematics in the University of Pisa; but he soon proved his fitness for it by discoveries which were very partially appreciated by his contemporaries. One of the first of the established dogmas which he undertook to overturn was, that bodies of unequal weights would fall through the same altitude in unequal times, corresponding to the relative difference of their weights. This doctrine, the futility of which is now known almost to every child, was held to with all the obstinacy of bigoted ignorance. The youngest of our readers have probably seen the simple and beautiful experiment of a feather and a piece of lead or a sovereign, dropt at the same moment within an exhausted receiver, when both reached the bottom at the same moment.

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This same experiment Galileo showed without the intervention of the air-pump, by ascending to the top of the celebrated Campanile or leaning tower of Pisa, from whence he dropped objects differing very considerably in weight, and observed that they reached the ground within a very slight interval of one another. This difference Galileo rightly attributed to the unequal resistance of the air,—a disturbing medium which is removed in the experiment conducted on a small scale within the exhausted receiver,—and he showed that the comparatively trifling interval between the time of their reaching the ground completely disproved the old theory, as there was not the slightest agreement between it and the different weights of the bodies referred to. It is at all times, however, easier to believe than to reason, and while the great majority of mankind are content to take for granted the statements that are affirmed as true on all points not directly affecting their previous opinions, none are so obstinately prejudiced against new truths as those who have adopted their belief without investigation. It was, however, those who claimed the name of philosophers that most bitterly opposed Galileo, for the first experiments which he performed publicly at Pisa were witnessed by an immense concourse of spectators, who testified enthusiastic admiration of their novelty and beauty.

The opposition now shown to Galileo by the partisans of the ancient philosophy was of the bitterest and most rancorous description. They saw the whole system to which they bigotedly clung threatened with overthrow by his arguments and demonstrations, and instead of opposing him with the same fair weapons, they raised against him such a host of annoyances and persecution, that he was at length compelled to resign his chair at Pisa.

The philosophers of Pisa having thus banished the only one from among them who was capable of teaching others, because he was himself a diligent student of the

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great book of nature, Galileo proceeded to Florence. There he met with a warm reception from some of his friends, and particularly from his old patron and adviser, Guido Ubaldi, through whose influence he was introduced to some of the chief noble families of Tuscany, and soon after the mathematical chair of the University of Padua was conferred on him for the limited period of six years. There he prosecuted his inquiries with increased success, and, within the period of his first appointment, he invented the thermometer, and the proportional compass or sector, in addition to writing several valuable treatises on mechanics, spherical astronomy, and other subjects which came within the range of his public instructions. On the expiration of his first engagement in 1599, the senate reappointed him for a similar period, at a greatly advanced salary, and it was a second time renewed, with additional advantages. This he repayed by many important contributions to science, and particularly by the discovery on which his fame more surely rests than perhaps on any of the great truths he made known to his fellow-men. "The year 1609," says one of his biographers, "was signalized by a discovery on the part of Galileo, which forms one of the most solid foundations of his glory. In the month of April a rumour was circulated in Venice that a Dutchman had presented to Count Maurice of Nassau an instrument, by which means distant objects appeared as if they were near at hand. On this slight and cursory hint Galileo immediately applied himself to discover whether the thing was possible, conformably with the passage of the luminous rays through spherical glasses of various forms. Some attempts made with lenses which he had at hand produced the desired effect; and next day he gave an account of his success to his friends, which, in fact, was nothing less than the invention of the telescope. A short time afterwards he presented several of these instruments to the senate of Venice, accompanied

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with a description in which he unfolded the immense consequences for nautical and astronomical observations which would certainly result from the discovery; and in recompense of his ingenuity his commission as professor was continued for life, with an allowance of salary triple that which he had previously received. Galileo neglected nothing calculated to evince his gratitude, or to add to the claims which had merited these favours. Indefatigable in his researches, he invented the microscope; he also improved his telescope, and soon brought it to a state fit to be applied to the observation of the heavens. He then perceived what as yet no mortal eye had ever seen; the surface of the moon, like that of the earth, bristled with high mountains and ploughed with deep valleys; Venus presenting, like the moon, phases which prove her rotundity; Jupiter environed with four satellites, who accompany him in his course; the milky way; the nebulæ; in a word, the whole heavens bespangled with a countless multitude of stars too small to be even perceived by the naked eye. It is more easy to conceive than describe the surprise and delight which the first view of so many wonders must have inspired him withal, as well as the admiration which they could not fail to produce when they were known. A few days having sufficed to pass them in review, he hastened to announce his observations to the world in a publication entitled *Nuncius Sidereus*, or Celestial Courier, which he dedicated to the princes of Medici, and which he continued at intervals, in proportion as he discovered new objects. He also observed that Saturn sometimes appeared under the form of a simple disc, and sometimes with two appendages which seemed two small planets; but it was reserved for another astronomer, Huygens, to demonstrate that these appearances were produced by the ring with which Saturn is surrounded. Galileo also discovered moveable spots on the globe or disc of the sun, whom the peripatetics had

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declared incorruptible, and did not hesitate from these to infer the rotation of that planet. He remarked that feeble light which, in the first and last quarters of the moon, renders visible, by means of the telescope, the part of her disc which is not then directly enlightened by the sun; and he concluded rightly that this effect was owing to the light reflected towards the moon by the earth. The continued observation of the spots of the moon satisfied him that that planet always presents nearly the same aspect; but in these he nevertheless recognised a species of periodic oscillation, to which he gave the name of libration, the exact laws of which were afterwards made known by Dominic Cassini. In a word, not less profound in following new truths to their consequences than subtile in discovering them, Galileo perceived the use to which the motions and eclipses of the satellites of Jupiter might be turned for the measure of longitudes; and he even undertook to make a sufficient number of observations of these stars to enable him to construct tables for the use of navigators."

It was unfortunate for Galileo that he was tempted to quit his honoured position at Padua, and to accept of the invitation of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who named him Mathematician extraordinary, and invited him to forsake the Venetian states for the capital of Tuscany. Florence probably had many attractions for him as a man of science, in addition to those peculiar claims it possessed from the residence there of some of his oldest friends. Nevertheless, he speedily found reason to repent his leaving a position of honour and liberal encouragement under the independent government of the Venetian republic, for any amount of reward that the Duke of Tuscany could offer, tramelled as he was by subservient bondage to the Court of Rome.

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CHAPTER III.

THE INQUISITION

THE Jesuits had always entertained a rancorous hatred of Galileo, partly occasioned by his adhering to the party in Padua by whom they had been expelled from the Venetian state. They therefore lost no time in assailing him as the promulgator of dangerous and anti-Christian opinions. He had declared the moon to be irregular in its surface, like our own earth, and had even affirmed the possibility of its being inhabited. He had assigned to the fixed stars a distance immensely beyond that which the old philosophers had determined as the limits of the system. The planet Jupiter had been shown by him to be attended with satellites, which he styled, in honour of his Florentine patron, Medicean stars; and Saturn appeared through his imperfect instruments, as three planets conjoined. He even went so far as to affirm that there were spots on the sun! And all this in direct contradiction to the absurd dogmas of the schoolmen, by which it was affirmed that *all the celestial bodies were perfectly round, self-luminous, and uncorrupted by any terrestrial tarnish!*

The discoveries of Galileo were reported by the Jesuits to the Inquisition at Rome, as falsehoods invented by him for the overthrow of the true religion. Some of his opponents affirmed that they had looked through the newly invented glasses whole nights, and seen nothing of all that he had affirmed, and doubted not but they were pure fictions invented to deceive the people. Ridicule was resorted to as well as falsehood, and every means adopted to undermine the credit and injure the character of the great philosopher. Galileo wrote many letters in his own justification, and indignantly repelled the accusa-

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tions of his enemies. He rejects the attempt to impose on him the reconcilement of the Bible with the Copernican theory, and in his letter to the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, remarks,—"I am inclined to believe that the intention of the sacred Scriptures is to give mankind the information necessary for their salvation, and which, surpassing all human knowledge, can by no other means be accredited than by the mouth of the Holy Spirit. But I do not hold it necessary to believe that the same God who has endowed us with senses, with speech, and with intellect, intended that we should neglect the use of these, and seek by other means for knowledge which they are sufficient to procure us; especially in a science like astronomy, of which so little notice is taken in the Scriptures, that none of the planets, except the sun and moon, and once or twice only Venus, under the name of Lucifer, are so much as named there. This therefore being granted, I think that in the discussion of natural problems we ought not to begin at the authority of texts of Scripture, but at sensible experiments and necessary demonstrations; for from the divine word sacred Scripture and nature did both alike proceed; and I conceive that, concerning natural effects, that which either sensible experience sets before our eyes, or necessary demonstrations prove unto us, ought not upon any account to be called in question, much less condemned, upon the testimony of Scripture texts, which may under their words couch senses seemingly contrary thereto." "Therefore, first let these men apply themselves to examine the arguments of Copernicus and others, and leave the condemning of them as erroneous and heretical to whom it belongs; yet let them not hope to find such rash and precipitate determinations in the judicious and holy fathers, or in the absolute wisdom of Him who cannot err, as those into which they suffer themselves to be hurried by some particular affection or interest of their own In these and such

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other positions, which are not directly articles of faith, no man doubts but his holiness has always an absolute power of admitting or condemning them; but *it is not in the power of any creature to make them to be true or false, otherwise than of their own nature and in fact they are.*"

These opinions, addressed as a noble defence of the right of private judgment, are alone proof of the greatness of Galileo above the men of his age; nevertheless they failed of effect. The Inquisition armed against him all her terrors, and Caccini was ordered to draw up depositions against him. He averted for a time the designs of his enemies by a personal appearance at Rome, where he so ably defended himself as to silence his persecutors. In March 1616, he was admitted to an audience by the Pope, Paul V., who assured him of his personal safety, but at the same time positively required him to refrain from teaching the heretical doctrines of Copernicus, as to the motion of the earth. To this Galileo was forced to consent, and immediately thereafter he left Rome in disgust. This was accomplishing the very object that his enemies aimed at. "The most certain method of reaching Galileo," says a recent writer, "was by prohibiting the doctrine of Copernicus. Neither the arguments which he urged in support of his opinions, nor the justice which they were forced to render to his knowledge, his merit, and even his catholicity, could prevent an assembly of theology, named by the Pope, from coming to the following conclusion:—'To maintain that the sun is placed immovable in the centre of the world, is an opinion absurd in itself, false in philosophy, and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to the Scriptures; to maintain that the earth is not placed in the centre of the world, that it is not immovable, and that it has even a daily motion of rotation, is also an absurd proposition, false in philosophy, and at least erroneous in point of faith.' Confounded at this deliverance, Galileo

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employed all the arguments which the truth suggested to him in defence of a doctrine which his observations had rendered indubitable; but his efforts were unavailing; his reasonings were disregarded; and as he had not showed sufficient deference to the decision of the holy office, he was personally interdicted from professing in future the opinions which had just been condemned.

Galileo returned to Florence in 1617, and resumed, with what grief may be easily imagined, the course of his astronomical labours. But his love for these sublime truths, of which he considered himself as the depositary, increasing in proportion to the efforts made to extinguish it, he undertook to silence, if he could not persuade, his adversaries, by collecting into a body all the physical proofs of the motion of the earth, and the constitution of the heavens; and during sixteen entire years he was engaged in this work. All that the finest genius could imagine in point of ingenuity, or the purest taste admit in point of elegance, he employed to render the truth attractive.

But if great genius was required for the composition of such a work, equal address was necessary to obtain permission to publish it; and this Galileo undertook to procure even in Rome itself. In 1630 he proceeded to that city, and having waited on the master of the sacred palace, boldly presented his work as a collection of new scientific fancies, at the same time requesting him to have the goodness to examine it scrupulously, to retrench whatever might appear to him exceptionable, and indeed to criticise it with the greatest severity. The prelate, not suspecting any thing, read it once and again; handed it to one of his colleagues for his opinion; and not seeing any thing reprehensible in the work, set his hand to the most ample approbation of its contents. But the permission thus obtained was not sufficient; for in order to profit by it, the work must be printed at Rome, and the numerous

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enemies of Galileo in that city would not have failed to explode the mine which the philosopher was himself charging to blow them up. On the pretext of some difficulty of communication between Rome and Florence occasioned by a contagious distemper which then prevailed, Galileo accordingly wrote to the master of the sacred palace, soliciting permission to print his work at Florence, on the condition of having it again examined in that city. But the prelate, who perhaps began to suspect some deception, made difficulties; pointed out to Galileo a new censor; and demanded to see the approbation which he had previously given, in order, as he said, to revise the terms in which it had been conceived. With this request Galileo could not refuse to comply; but the prelate having once got hold of the document, refused to restore it, or to give any answer in explanation of his conduct, so that Galileo, after making every effort to recover it, and even causing it to be demanded by the ambassador of Tuscany, was compelled to abandon the pursuit as hopeless; and, contenting himself with the approbation of the censor of Florence, which he now managed to obtain, he published his work in 1632."

The opponents of Galileo were not to be baffled, either by his ingenious defence, or by a degree of favour that had been extended to him by Pope Urban VIII. They persuaded the pontiff that a part of the treatise had been written expressly to turn him into ridicule, and accordingly, notwithstanding the mediation of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the exertions of his ambassador at the papal court, the work of Galileo was condemned by the Inquisition, and himself summoned to answer for his opinions before that dread tribunal. He was now in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and suffering under infirmities that rendered such a journey peculiarly trying. Immediately on his arrival in Rome, he was put under arrest, and on the following morning he was visited by the Com-

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missary of the Holy Inquisition, who, with many professions of friendship, urged him to repair the great scandal which he had given to all Italy by the heretical doctrine of the motion of the earth.

The result is well known. The great Tuscan philosopher was compelled, on his knees, to swear to a series of propositions which affirmed the immoveability of the earth and the movement of the sun round it every twenty-four hours. His book was prohibited to be published or read. He was himself condemned to the prison of the Inquisition during its pleasure, and finally he had to declare—"I abjure, curse, and detest the error and heresy of the motion of the earth, and promise never more to assert, verbally or in writing, that the sun is the centre of the system, and immoveable; or that the earth is not the centre of the universe, or that it is moveable!" Rising from his knees, after this solemn act of mockery, the aged philosopher turned to one who stood near him, and exclaimed, "*E pur se muove*—It moves for all that!" The whole procedure has been well characterized as one of the most remarkable acts of intolerant ignorance and bigoted folly to be found in the history of science. It is altogether humiliating; we feel ashamed of our common humanity, as we look on the haughty display of dogmatic bigotry and blindness in the judges; nor is it relieved by all the palliating circumstances that can be affirmed on behalf of the great Galileo,—the greatest and wisest man of his time,—solemnly pronouncing a lie! The whole wording of the sentence of the Inquisition is a curious specimen of the assumed infallibility of Rome. The following are its concluding words:—"Having seen and maturely considered the merits of your cause, with your said confessions and excuses, and every thing else which ought to be seen and considered, we have come to the underwritten final sentence against you. Invoking, therefore, the most holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his

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most glorious Virgin Mother, Mary, by this our final sentence, which, sitting in council and judgment for the tribunal of the reverend masters of sacred theology, and doctors of both laws, our assessors, we put forth in this writing touching the matters and controversies before us, between the magnificent Charles Sincerus, doctor of both laws, fiscal proctor of this holy office of the one part, and you, Galileo Galilei, an examined and confessed criminal from this present writing now in progress as above of the other part, we pronounce, judge, and declare, that you, the said Galileo, by reason of these things which have been detailed in the course of this writing, and which, as above, you have confessed, have rendered yourself vehemently suspected by this holy office of heresy; that is to say, that you believe and hold the false doctrine, and contrary to the holy and divine Scriptures, namely, that the sun is the centre of the world, and that it does not move from east to west, and that the earth does move, and is not the centre of the world; also that an opinion can be held and supported as probable after it has been declared and finally decreed contrary to the Holy Scripture, and consequently that you have incurred all the censures and penalties enjoined and promulgated in the sacred canons, and other general and particular constitutions against delinquents of this description. From which it is our pleasure that you be absolved, provided that, first, with a sincere heart and unfeigned faith, in our presence, you abjure, curse, and detest the said errors and heresies, and every other error and heresy contrary to the Catholic and apostolic church of Rome, in the form now shown to you. But, that your grievous and pernicious error and transgression may not go altogether unpunished, and that you may be made more cautious in future, and may be a warning to others to abstain from delinquencies of this sort, we decree that the book of the Dialogues of Galileo Galilei be prohibited by a public

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edict, and we condemn you to the formal prison of this holy office, for a period determinable at our pleasure; and by way of salutary penance, we order you, during the next three years, to recite once a week the seven penitential psalms, reserving to ourselves the power of moderating, commuting, or taking off the whole or part of the said punishment and penance."

It has been affirmed by many that the aged philosopher was even subjected to the horrid torture of the rack before he yielded to abjure what he knew to be true. Such would seem to be implied by the words which occur in his judgment, *rigorosum examen*, and the intestinal hernia with which he was ever after afflicted seems to corroborate the fact. We almost hesitate in deciding whether the honour of humanity seems to suffer more by the ready yielding of the philosopher to abjure the truth; or by the cruelty of his intolerant judges, in proceeding to such extremities to subdue his great mind to their narrow standard! However it was, the spirit of the old man was broken; persecution had amply done its work. Afflictions followed closely to darken his closing years. In 1634, he lost a beloved daughter, who was the greatest comfort and sole stay of his declining years. He was allowed to return to Arcetri, where he witnessed his daughter breathe her last. He was not, however, relieved from the sentence of the Inquisition. He was kept there in close confinement, and after two years passed in solitude and restraint, he was subjected to still greater rigour, owing to fresh suspicions with which his enemies had succeeded in inspiring the Pope. He had been allowed to visit Florence, but that relaxation of his severe sentence was altogether withdrawn. He had attempted to solace his hours of loneliness and sorrow by the composition of a work known as his "Dialogues on Motion." It was written under the terrors of inquisitorial oversight, and was such a work as he conceived could furnish no

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cause of offence to the familiars of the Holy Office. Nevertheless such was the terror which their proceedings had inspired, that no one could be found daring enough to undertake the printing of it, and some years elapsed ere at length a Dutch printer was induced to do what no one in Italy would venture upon. Finally, within two years after the loss of his daughter, he became totally blind, and the last days of the old man were passed in darkness and sorrow, relieved only by the anticipation which doubtless cheered him even in the prison of the Inquisition, that other generations would appreciate the great lessons which his own age had forbid to be promulgated; shutting their eyes against the most wondrous revelations of science, and sealing his lips, lest he should reveal to them the glories of God in the works of creation. It was while thus suffering under the weight of years and misfortunes, that Milton visited him as he passed through Italy, while yet hope and youth and bright anticipations cheered the great poet, whose closing days were so nearly to resemble those of the noble Tuscan whom he celebrated in immortal song.

Galileo appears to have been a most loveable character in all the relationships of private life. Somewhat hasty in temper, but easily reconciled, and exceedingly affectionate and forgiving. He was generous to a fault, lavishing on his relatives and friends every thing that he thought would gratify them, so as frequently to embarrass himself thereby. He entered heartily into all the social enjoyments of life, and retained even in extreme old age much of the vivacity of early youth. He excelled in music, painting, and poetry, and was altogether one of those men of genial and kindly temperament, who can find in all circumstances, and nearly in all society, some sources of enjoyment. It becomes the more painful to reflect on such a man, bowed down beneath the weight of such harsh inflictions, expiring amid the sus-

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picions and cruelties of the persecutors of truth, and the miseries which had followed in their train. He died at Arcetri on the 8th of January, 1642, in the 78th year of his age. The associations that linger about this interesting spot are thus beautifully alluded to in Rogers's Italy:—

"We hail
Thy sunny slope, *Arcetri*, sung of old
For its green wine; dearer to me, to most,
As dwelt on by that great Astronomer,
Seven years a prisoner at the city gate,
Let in but in his grave-clothes. Sacred he,
His villa,—justly was it called the Gem!—
Sacred the lawn, where many a cypress threw
Its length of shadow, while he watched the stars!
Sacred the vineyard, where, while yet his sight
Glimmered, at blush of morn he dressed his vines,
Chanting aloud in gaiety of heart
Some verse of Ariosto. There unseen,
In manly beauty MILTON stood before him,
Gazing with reverent awe—MILTON, his guest,
Just then come forth all life and enterprise;
He in his old age and extremity,
Blind, at noon-day exploring with his staff;
His eyes upturned as to the golden sun,
His eye-balls idly rolling. Little then
Did GALILEO think whom he received;
That in his hand he held the hand of one
Who could requite him—who would spread his name
O'er lands and seas—great as himself, nay greater;
Milton as little that in him he saw,
As in a glass, what he himself should be,
Destined so soon to fall on evil days
And evil tongues—so soon, alas, to live
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude!"

CHAPTER IV.

NEWTON.

ONE year after the death of Galileo, a prisoner of the Inquisition, though at large in his own villa of Arcetri

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without the gates of Florence, Isaac Newton, the great Christian philosopher, was born at the manor-house of Woolsthorpe, in Lincolnshire. The old manor-house is a plain but substantial dwelling, beautifully situated in a sheltered valley, beside the river Witham, and there on the 25th December, O.S., 1642, Newton first saw the light. His mother, the daughter of a neighbouring squire, had been left a widow within a few months after her marriage, and he himself was ushered into the world prematurely, so feeble and diminutive a child, that the attendants, who had been successively despatched for medical aid, were astonished to find him in life on their return.

Under such melancholy circumstances was this helpless infant born into this world; feeble and delicate, beyond even the common lot, while yet destined through a busy lifetime to devote the activity of youth and manhood, and the vigour of a ripe old age, to the profoundest discoveries in science, and the production of writings that the universal suffrages of a century of the greatest activity in every department of science and learning, still pronounce pre-eminent above all the productions of human intellect.

The accounts that have been preserved of the early years of Newton are replete with lively interest. Like many other boys who have afterwards risen to eminence, he is said to have proved but a dull and inattentive scholar,—not from any tardiness in the development of his mental faculties, but rather from their early activity; so that, already occupied with his own lively fancies, they were slow to lend a ready attention to the dull routine of elementary studies. An occurrence of a very simple nature is said to have first stirred in him the ambition to excel in the ordinary studies of his age. The boy immediately above him in his class had treated him with cruelty, and at length kicked him so severely in the stomach as to occasion him very great pain. It affords a pleasing proof of the natural nobleness of his disposition,

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that he seems to have sought no other revenge than that of excelling his persecutor. He immediately applied himself with great diligence to his studies, till he succeeded in getting above him in the school, and the stimulus once received, he never rested till he had attained the top of his class.

The first original bent which Newton's mind displayed was that of mechanical invention. He early provided himself with a complete assortment of little tools,—saws, hammers, files, and the like, which he acquired great dexterity in handling; and while his companions were busy in the play-ground, the little philosopher would be industriously labouring in some quiet corner to complete some original mechanical contrivance, or to perfect the model of one that had excited his interest.

In his twelfth year, he was sent to the public school at Grantham. There chanced at this time to be a windmill erecting in the neighbourhood, which immediately attracted his attention;—he daily employed his leisure time in watching its progress, and acquired so thorough a knowledge of the machinery, that he constructed a small working model of it, which he placed on the top of the house where he lodged, and delighted himself and his young friends by observing it put in motion by the wind. The machinery was so complete a copy of the original as to excite general admiration; but this he farther improved upon by an ingenious contrivance for propelling it by means of a mouse, which was stimulated to exert its power by unavailing attempts to reach some corn placed over its head. This he styled his miller, and by means of this motive power he gratified himself by observing the action of the machinery in his study.

The next mechanical contrivance of Isaac was a water-clock. On the top of an upright box he placed another, adapted as a reservoir of water, which was perforated with a small hole, and by the continual dropping of the water

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a float was kept in motion that turned the index of the dial-plate as it rose. The young inventor perfected this ingenious contrivance with such care, that it was used as a clock long after his departure, by Mr. Clarke, a surgeon, with whom he lodged while at Grantham; and Dr. Stukely records a conversation he held with him many years afterwards, at the Royal Society, on the value of such instruments, and the obstacles to their perfection and durability.

Newton is described at this time as "a sober, silent, thinking lad," fond of retirement, and little disposed to quarrel with his own company. Yet with all this love of retirement, he manifested no shade of misanthropy. He was the same active little philosopher among his school-fellows as in his own study, and delighted in applying his constructive talents to their aid. He introduced the flying of paper kites, and laboured with as much zeal in calculating their most effective form and proportions, and determining the position for attaching the string and tail, as ever he did in maturer years to ascertain the laws of motion of the heavenly bodies. It was his delight, also, to construct paper lanterns, which he attached to the tail of the kites in a dark night, and filled the country round with portentous rumours of meteors and fiery flying comets. He amused himself likewise with the use of his pencil, in which he obtained great proficiency, varying his occupations again by employing his constructive abilities in framing his most successful productions; and to this, as he grew older, he added that of writing verse, occasionally superadding these efforts of his muse, as a further adornment to his drawings. Few of these early productions have been preserved; but the strict subjection of the imaginative faculties to the other mental powers, which he invariably displayed, renders it improbable that such early efforts exhibited much poetic fervour.

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But while the studious scholar was employed, as we have described, in amusing himself with ingenious manifestations of mechanical skill, his attention seems to have been directed thus early to the movements of the heavenly bodies. We have already described his construction of a water-clock, and the completion of this, with the difficulties experienced in regulating its action, probably suggested the idea of a more perfect means for the measurement of time. By carefully noting the shifting shadows as they moved along the walls and neighbouring roofs of his lodging at Grantham, he succeeded in providing what may be styled a natural dial for his own use; and this he followed up by tracing out one, corrected by the observations of successive years, upon one of the walls of the house, which was long afterwards referred to as a good time-piece by the neighbourhood, under the name of Isaac's dial.

From these pleasing and significant recreations, Newton was recalled to Woolsthorpe at the age of fifteen, to assist in the farming operations of the small estate attached to the old manor-house, and to qualify himself for the position he was then supposed destined to occupy as a country squire. It will hardly excite wonder that the young philosopher proved no adept at farming. He was too busy with his sun-dials for the correct measurement of time, to trouble himself much with what might be deemed the useful occupation of it. "The perusal of a book," says his best biographer, Sir David Brewster, "the execution of a model, or the superintendence of a water-wheel of his own construction, whirling the glittering spray from some neighbouring stream, absorbed all his thoughts when the sheep were going astray, and the cattle were devouring or treading down the corn." Very useless occupations, doubtless, they must have appeared for the hereditary farmer of Woolsthorpe.

It fortunately chanced at this time that one of his

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uncles, who was rector at a village some few miles distant, found him one day seated under a hedge, with his book in his hand, and so intensely absorbed with his subject, as not to observe the intruder. His uncle was surprised, on examining the book, to find he was deep in the solution of a mathematical problem. He immediately employed his influence with his mother to allow him to resume his studies, and as his assistance was not likely to be greatly missed on the farm, he was forthwith sent back to Grantham school, whence he proceeded in a few months to the University of Cambridge, and entered on the real studies of his life at Trinity College.

Of his early studies at Cambridge even less is known than of his juvenile proceedings at Grantham. His reserved and meditative habits were little calculated to attract particular notice at a busy university, where close study implied no superior mental faculties or peculiar genius. His own note-books furnish us with the interesting fact that in 1664 he purchased a prism,—the simple instrument which he turned to such grand results, that Roubilliac has represented him in the marble statue that adorns the ante-chapel of Trinity College, holding a prism in his hand, and looking upward, as if engaged in deep thought on the mysterious secrets of light.

The progress of Newton at the university is now only apparent from its own records. In 1668 he took his degree of Master of Arts; the same year he was appointed to a senior fellowship, and the following year he succeeded Dr. Barrow in the Lucasian Professorship of Mathematics. The period of his appointment to this honourable office nearly coincides with some of his grandest discoveries.

"During the year 1666," says Sir David Brewster, "he had applied himself to the grinding of optic glasses of other figures than spherical, and having, no doubt, experienced the impracticability of executing such lenses,

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the idea of examining the phenomena of colour was one of those sagacious and fortunate impulses which more than once led him to discovery." The wonderful powers of the telescope, then so recently called into being, were well calculated to excite the philosophic mind to aim at perfecting it. Only half a century before had Galileo, while at Venice, been struck by the rumour of such a discovery,—a tube containing glass lenses, that brought distant objects near at hand. We have already detailed the proceedings of the great Tuscan philosopher. The idea instantly struck him as one of the utmost value to science, and by the knowledge he possessed of the property of the glass lenses, he constructed several telescopes of increasing power, the last of which magnified nearly a thousand times. The very first time he directed this new instrument to the heavens, he discovered three of Jupiter's moons.

Newton applied his investigations to the discovery of the properties of light itself. By means of a prism he examined the curious phenomena of different colours termed the prismatic hues; and after having defined the regular appearance and relative position of each hue, he observed that the red rays were invariably the least bent from the straight line, and the violet rays the most so, and that each colour has its own specific and unchanging angle of refraction; from whence he drew the important conclusion that *light consists of rays differing in colour and refrangibility.*

No sooner had Newton established this important truth, than he proceeded to apply it to remove the imperfection of that valuable instrument the telescope. The cause of its defects at once became apparent, for, since the rays of every different colour were refracted at a different angle, they must each converge to a different focus; and hence in the refracting telescope the eye must receive the perfect image of the object formed by the rays of one colour

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and a series of imperfect and confused ones occasioned by the radiations of the other colours at their different angles. Satisfied of this, Newton at once abandoned all idea of further improvement in this kind of telescope, and by applying the principle of reflection, at length completed an instrument which has formed the basis of all the improvements in the telescope. We shall not attempt to explain the value of this new principle further than to state, that as he found all colours are reflected regularly, so that the angle of reflection is equal to the angle of incidence, the divergence of the rays was thus corrected, and the image restored to a uniform combination of the rays of light before it was received on the eye.

Amid these interesting speculations, Newton was forced to quit Cambridge by the breaking out of the plague there in 1666, and more than two years elapsed before he made any further progress in the subject.

It was while spending this period of retirement at Woolsthorpe Manor-House, that the first idea occurred to him of that wonderful law of gravitation that finally resulted in the system of the universe, which forms the main subject of his immortal work, the *Principia*. The popular account of this interesting suggestive thought is well known. Sitting one day in his garden at Woolsthorpe, he observed an apple fall from a neighbouring tree; and reflecting on the power of that principle of gravitation by which it was thus brought to the earth, he arrived at that magnificent theory which he afterwards demonstrated to the world.

The latest biographer of Newton, while admitting that the idea occurred to him at this period, and while seated in his garden, has thrown a doubt on this popular anecdote. But resting as it does on very early tradition, and having been related by M. Biot. on the authority of Pemberton, the contemporary and friend of Newton, there seems no object gained by challenging so natural and probable a narrative.

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An aged apple-tree in the garden of the old manor-house long attracted notice by the tradition which associated it with a discovery so important. It was blown down about sixteen years since, but the present owner of Woolsthorpe has had an arm chair formed out of the wood, and in this form it still remains near its old site as an interesting memorial of the great philosopher whose youth and manhood were passed there, and whose most important reflections were followed out beneath its shade.

CHAPTER V

THE SYSTEM OF THE UNIVERSE.

NEWTON returned to Cambridge in 1668, where we soon afterwards find him engaged in applying his recent discoveries as to the nature of light to the construction of a telescope calculated to obviate the defects that had heretofore limited the powers of that instrument. His success was such as must have amply realized his highest expectations. This first reflecting telescope ever executed, though only *six inches long*, and constructed with very imperfect materials, was yet found nearly equal in power to a six-foot instrument on the old principle. It was sent to the Royal Society of London at the request of some of the most eminent scientific men of that day, and the same year a minute description of the instrument and the principle of its construction, was published in the "Philosophical Transactions." This telescope is still in the possession of the Royal Society. It is carefully preserved in the library at Somerset House, as one of the most valued treasures of the Society, and on the stand of it a plate bears the following inscription:—

INVENTED BY SIR ISAAC NEWTON,
AND MADE WITH HIS OWN HANDS, 1671.

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Newton's discovery of the fundamental properties of light swept away a cumbrous array of illogical definitions by which ignorance had sought to satisfy itself, and account for the phenomena which he at once reduced to simple laws. Sir David Brewster thus beautifully exhibits the effects of Newton's Theory of Light in revealing the means by which the beauty and diversity that nature displays is produced: "If," says he, "the objects of the material world had been illuminated with white light, all the particles of which possessed the same degree of refrangibility, and were equally acted upon by the bodies on which they fall, all nature would shine with a leaden hue, and all the combinations of external objects, and all the features of the human countenance, would have exhibited no other variety than that which they possess in a pencil-sketch or a China ink drawing. The rainbow itself would have dwindled into a narrow arch of white light; the stars would have shone through a grey sky; and the mantle of a wintry twilight would have replaced the golden vesture of the rising and the setting sun; but He who has exhibited such matchless skill in the organization of material bodies, and such exquisite taste in the forms upon which they are modelled, has superadded that ethereal beauty which enhances their permanent qualities, and presents them to us in the ever-varying characters of the spectrum. Without this the foliage of vegetable life might have filled the eye and fostered the fruit which it veils; but the youthful green of its spring would have been blended with the dying yellow of its autumn. Without this the diamond might have displayed to science the beauty of its forms, and yielded to the arts its adamantine virtues, but would have ceased to shine in the chaplet of beauty, and to sparkle in the diadem of princes. Without this, the human countenance might have expressed all the sympathies of the heart, but 'the purple light of love' would not have

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risen on the cheek, nor the hectic flush been the herald of its decay."

From these valuable, but secondary observations, however, we turn to his grand idea of the universality of the law of gravitation, which we have already seen suggested to the reflective mind of Newton, and which he now proceeded to test by the laborious calculations of mathematical science. No incident recorded in the life of Newton so distinctly exhibits the sound character of his clear and philosophic mind as that which he displayed when he proceeded to apply his theory of gravitation to account for the orbitual motions of the earth. Being absent from books, he took the common estimate then received of the measurement of the earth, which differed nearly ten miles in every degree from the true one,—the consequence of which was, that the force of gravity differed by a sixth from that which is observable in the true motion of the moon in her orbit; from which he concluded that some other cause must co-operate with this force in producing its motion. Being unable to discover this supposed second force, he at once laid these speculations aside, and returned to the investigations in optics, which we have described. It was not till sixteen years later that an occurrence of a very interesting nature led him to resume the subject. At a meeting of the Royal Society, the measurement of a degree of the meridian, which had been executed by M. Pichard three years before, became the subject of conversation. From this Newton calculated the diameter of the earth, and immediately resumed his calculations as to the effect of gravity on the moon. In the progress of his calculation from these new data, finding that it manifestly tended towards the long-wished-for result, he was thrown into such a state of excitement, that he was unable to proceed, and had to entreat one of his friends to complete it for him. The result was such as to confirm his previous

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ideas, establishing this grand law of universal gravitation as ruling the motions of the spheres, and binding into one great family the remotest stars that spangle the nightly sky.

It is obvious from the promptness with which Newton availed himself of the new data as to the circumference of the earth, that the conviction of this power had never been abandoned by him; and now, after so many years of suspense, the influence of such a result on his mind might well excite in him these unwonted feelings. No sooner had he recognized this universal law in its first results, than he pursued it to its remotest consequences, with a boldness of thought never before displayed in science. The whole material universe, with all the complicated movements of the heavenly bodies, were at once presented to his mind as the result of one grand, simple, and all-pervading force.

Who that considers the vastness of these truths thus disclosed to the mind of Newton, will wonder that in the great philosopher should be found also the humble Christian;—that he who had learned so much more than any other of the secrets of Creation, and who had discovered in the objects of the astronomer's investigation evidences of an all-pervading power and governance undreamt-of before, should, more than any other, acknowledge the force of that declaration, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth his handy-work." His thoughts on this memorable occasion might well be rendered in the words of the great divine, Dr. Chalmers, whose recent and sudden death has excited so universal a feeling of regret. "In yon gilded canopy of heaven we see the broad aspect of the universe, where each shining point presents us with a sun, and each sun with a system of worlds,—where the Deity reigns in all the grandeur of His high attributes, where He peoples immensity with His wonders, and travels in the great-

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ness of His strength through the dominions of one vast and unlimited monarchy."

We have already witnessed the intolerance and bigotry which followed the great Tuscan philosopher through every step of his magnificent disclosures. No Inquisition watched with blind jealousy over the great discoveries of the English philosopher, yet the same spirit of ignorant narrow-mindedness assailed the truths he made known. So much was he affected by the acrimony and abuse with which he was assailed, that he determined on suppressing the Third Book of his Principia, which contains the theory of comets. Fortunately, however, the solicitations of his friends induced him to submit to their desire for the publication of the entire work, which appeared in a complete form in the year 1687.

Some idea may be formed of the profundity of the discoveries which this work contained, from the fact that only two or three of Newton's contemporaries throughout Europe were capable of understanding it. "A work," says his recent biographer, "which is memorable not only in the annals of one science or of one country, but which will form an epoch in the history of the world, and will ever be regarded as the brightest page in the records of human reason." The extent of knowledge which Newton forthwith deduced from his great discovery is scarcely conceivable to ordinary minds. He at once calculated the quantity of matter in the sun, and in all the planets that have satellites. He further proved the specific gravity of each, by means of which he at once determined their relative weight; and following out with patient sagacity the just deductions from the universal law, he discovered the cause of tides, of the spherical form of the planets, as modified by the revolution of each round its own axis; and of the motion of comets, and their relation as members of our solar system.

But from these marvellous disclosures of science, we

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turn to the interesting studies with which the great Christian philosopher solaced his leisure. It is delightful to find the humble and teachable spirit of the Christian allied to such gigantic powers of intellect. To the infidel philosophers of France it appeared altogether unaccountable that the discoverer of the primary laws of the universe should have spent his time in writing a series of *Letters on the existence of a Deity;* or that he should have seriously devoted himself to the study of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament Scriptures, and of the mysterious revelations of the Apocalypse.

To Newton's great mind, however, the book of Revelation appeared as the work of the same hand that built the sky, and called into being the innumerable stars whose vastness and immensity were better understood by him than by any one who had before sought to investigate their secrets. No amount of knowledge excited him to presumption, but, on the contrary, we find him exhibiting the docility of a child in the investigation of every new truth, and the humility of one who felt that he had only discovered enough to see how vast and unsearchable are the depths of knowledge in God's works, which will employ eternity in searching them out. Far more than any one before, Newton had learned that "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language wherein their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the Lord is perfect."

The sole acknowledgment of his great mental powers

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which Newton had yet received was his appointment to the chair of Mathematics at Cambridge, and this had preceded his most important discoveries. A great change now, however, occurred to him, influencing the character and occupations of his future life. He had reached his fifty-third year, without a single token of recognition by his country of aught that he had accomplished in the cause of science. His friends had in vain endeavoured to obtain from Government some addition to the straitened income which, up to this time, had received no augmentation since his appointment to the Lucasian Chair. One of his early college friends, Charles Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, who had sat along with him in the Convention Parliament, had ever continued to look up to him with the veneration and love of a disciple, and co-operated with him on various occasions in promoting the objects the great philosopher had at heart. In 1694, Montague was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, and one of the first uses he made of his elevation was to recommend Newton to the office of Warden of the Mint, with a salary of £600 a-year.

In fulfilment of the duties of his new office, Newton had now to exchange the seclusion of a College life, with the pleasing occupation of his scientific investigations, for the bustling scenes of the capital. Under his able superintendence, the entire money of the realm was renewed within two years after his appointment, and four years after his removal to London he was promoted to the Mastership of the Mint, an office worth from twelve to fifteen hundred pounds a-year. Honours now flowed upon the great philosopher. He was elected one of the earliest foreign members of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris; in 1701 he was again chosen as the representative of his University in the British Parliament; and in 1705, Queen Anne conferred on him the honour of knighthood while on a visit to the University of Cambridge.

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It is unnecessary to follow into minuter details the history of the greatest philosopher of any age or country, whom it has been the honour and privilege of England to give birth to, and to cherish. About the year 1722, he made arrangements for the publication of a third edition of the Principia, which appeared with numerous additions in 1726. Though advancing towards the allotted term of human life, his faculties still retained all their vigour. His habits were of the simplest character, his diet remarkably temperate, consisting principally of vegetables and fruit, and his mode of living plain and unostentatious, yet characterized by the utmost generosity. He latterly declined all invitations, and was equally unwilling to break in on his domestic peace with the bustle of numerous guests. Yet he was eminently social in his tastes, and delighted in the society of a few congenial friends, among whom he would occasionally disclose the splendid theories which his great discoveries in astronomy suggested to his mind. His mind remained strong and vigorous to the last; and on Monday the 20th of March, 1727, he expired in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

The body of the great philosopher lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, and was thence borne to its last resting-place, near the entrance to the choir in Westminster Abbey. His funeral was attended by the most learned and noble in the land. The pall was borne by the Lord High Chancellor, the Dukes of Roxburghe and Montrose, and the Earls of Pembroke, Sussex, and Macclesfield, all fellows of the Royal Society, and who doubtless felt that in bearing the body of Newton to the tomb, they were not conferring, but receiving honour. A costly monument was erected to his memory, whereon is engraved a Latin inscription, which, after recording his great discoveries, thus sums up his character:—"An assiduous, sagacious, and faithful interpreter of nature,

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antiquity, and the Holy Scriptures; he asserted in his philosophy the majesty of God, and exhibited in his life the simplicity of the Gospel. Let mortals rejoice that such a one has existed—AN ORNAMENT TO THE HUMAN RACE!"

On the pedestal of the fine statue erected in his own college at Cambridge, this brief inscription is carved,

> Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit.
> Who surpassed all men in genius.

But "the pomp of heraldry," or sculpture's nobler honours, can yield but a poor and insufficient tribute to the worth of this the greatest of men. The reputation of others, the sages of their time, has waned with the increasing knowledge of succeeding ages;—they that have shone as bright suns, illuminating their own generations, have waxed dim with the increasing light that their own discoveries gave birth to;—but the reputation of Newton increases with the discoveries of his successors,—the noblest of them seem but as the flamens that wait around this great high priest of nature and truth,—the highest intellect bows down with the greatest reverence before his master-mind.

Newton appears to have shone in every relation of life. He was generous without ostentation, and so unbounded in his charity as frequently to embarrass himself. He cherished the great principles of religious toleration at a period when they were little understood, and expressed his abhorrence of every form of persecution; while he boldly defended the rights of his university and the great principles of Protestantism, when James II. covertly sought to pave the way for the re-establishment of Popery in England, by ordering the University of Cambridge to admit Father Francis, an ignorant monk of the Benedictine order, to the rank and privileges of a Master of Arts. He bore an active share in the Revolution that followed, by which

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Parliament in 1688, and lent the aid of his powerful intellect to the concocting of those measures, from the enactment of which his countrymen have ever since dated the permanent establishment of national liberty. He was in every respect a noble man, and the truest exhibition the world has ever witnessed of a CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER.

Such are the noble manifestations of worth and true greatness which have excited the admiration of every succeeding age. But among all the characteristics of his mind which excite our wonder and delight, none are so remarkable as his modesty; a modesty which originated in the vastness of his discoveries. Looking far beyond all other men into the secrets of the universe, the greatness that it disclosed to him only convinced him of the boundless depths of creation yet unexplored, to which even his knowledge must be altogether limited and imperfect. He knew well the worth of what he had accomplished, and, when circumstances compelled him, could vindicate his claims to his discoveries, and assert their just value as fundamental truths in science; yet he exclaimed a little before his death, "I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

When we reflect on the character of Newton, and all that he has accomplished for the human race, we are lost in admiration at the greatness, the modesty, and the simplicity of the man. His great predecessor, Bacon, declared that his demonstration of the Inductive Philosophy put ordinary men on a level with men of genius. This was an overstatement and exaggeration, in as far as it overlooked the necessary superiority of genius while using the same instrument as the man of ordinary facul-

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ties. In Newton's case, however, it could be far more justly said that he supplied a key to the whole system of nature, by which hypothesis was supplanted, and philosophic reasoning almost rendered superfluous, so that it only remained for the future student of science to enlarge his powers of observation by material means, and to multiply his store of facts, and then applying to these the great laws established by Newton, at once to reduce the whole to order and system.

Newton presents the remarkable instance of a discoverer, who at the end of nearly a century and a half after the promulgation of his chief discoveries,—during which time the objects of his chief study have become the subject of keenest investigation in an age remarkable for scientific activity,—still retains, by universal consent, the pre-eminent position of unequalled genius in the history of the human race. He was the first to introduce the beautiful principle on which the reflecting telescope is constructed, yet how vast the strides that have been made since his time in the improvement of this instrument. Herschell considered that his ten feet telescope possessed a power of penetrating space that enabled him to descry a star twenty-eight and a half times farther off than those we see with the naked eye. If we reflect for a moment on the vast distance of the very nearest of these, and multiply it by that increase of power, how vastly enlarged is the sphere of our observation. Yet that is a trifle when compared with the Rosse telescope, that has astonished the scientific world in our own day, and promises to form a new epoch in the history of sciences. Its powers almost exceed the ordinary definitions of arithmetic. It could descry a cluster of stars consisting of 5000 individuals, were it situated three hundred thousand times deeper in space than Sirius probably is! This wonderful instrument has searched the heavens, and still we return from its observations to the

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great laws established by Newton, and to the nobler simplicity of his Christian faith, and acknowledge him as the greatest among the sons of genius. With the teachable docility of a child, and yet with the earnest perseverance of high intellectual activity, he read from the great book of nature her marvellous and untold laws, whereby the universe is ruled; he explained to all that God governed the world by laws wonderful in their simplicity; while yet he taught others by his example that therein he the more discovered the majesty and infinite power of the Creator and Preserver of all things. God not only has created all things, but all things subsist only by his sustaining power, as completely as they owed their first being to his word. "He literally creates the universe every moment. Every instant is a new morning of creation. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending; the Creator, the Sustainer, the Provider, in whom we live, move, and have our being."

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GENIUS IN THE FINE ARTS.

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"Having impatiently inquired from the artist when he meant to finish it, and Michael Angelo replying, 'When I am able;' 'When I am able!' retorted Julius, in great wrath, 'thou hast a mind, then, that I should have thee thrown from the scaffold.'"—P. 133.

GENIUS IN THE FINE ARTS.

CHAPTER I.—GIOVANNI CIMABUE.

IN early life, extraordinary genius rarely indeed fails to manifest its powers; yet even the strongest minds are swayed by external circumstances, and it often seems, as if some slight, and altogether fortuitous, chance, had determined the bent of men of genius, and pointed out for them the path whereon to

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win worthy achievements. That peculiar genius which manifests itself in the production of works of Art, has oftener than any other, exhibited itself as a ruling passion forming with the opening mind; and in no case is this more strikingly apparent than in the history of Cimabue and Giotto, the illustrious revivers of Art in the thirteenth century.

Giovanni Cimabue, the child of a noble Italian ancestry, was born at Florence in the year 1240. It has justly been contended by recent writers that the period was by no means so entirely destitute of every feeling for Art, and every opportunity of studying its powers, as Vasari, the historian of Italian Art, has represented, and numerous writers that succeeded him have endeavoured to demonstrate. The period was, on the contrary, altogether favourable for the enlistment of popular sympathy in behalf of a great painter.

The Arts had already become the handmaid of religion. The Cathedral of Pisa was rising in its magnificence of form, uniting the beauties of sculpture and architecture; and,—what was of far greater importance in its permanent influence on the development of every form of genius,—free institutions were springing up in nearly all the northern States of Italy. But although Cimabue may not have a just claim to the title of "The Father of Modern Painting" in its strictest sense, there is yet sufficient in his interesting and remarkable history, as one of the foremost leaders in the revival of Italian Art, to command our admiration and attract us to the study of his life.

Giovanni, as the scion of a noble house, enjoyed the advantages of education at a period when such were rarely thought of even for the sons of princes. It should probably, indeed, be received as a proof of the early genius displayed by the ardent boy, that he was sent by his parents, when a mere youth, to study under the care

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of the Brothers of the Convent of Santa Maria Novella, at Florence. He was probably destined thus early for the Church, in which his own abilities and his family's influence would hold out the promise of high, perhaps even the highest, honours, that were attainable within its pale. The noble boy, however, was gifted with a wayward genius that spurned at the ordinary restraints and the dull routine of the school-room. Already his mind displayed its future bent, and the school-book, instead of affording the theme of a dull and tedious task, was decorated with the rude crayon drawings of the embryo painter.

We can fancy the horror and indignation of the old monk when he discovered the pastime of his wayward pupil. School-books in the thirteenth century were very different things from the penny primers and sixpenny hornbooks of our own school days. The young Giovanni would have to con his task on some quaint illumined missal, probably now worth its weight in gold, if it still exist on the dusty shelves of some monastic library, or, better prized, among the literary treasures of London or Paris. We fear the professors of Greek and Latin in the Convent of Santa Maria Novella would adopt such summary measures to convince their erratic pupil of the grave nature of his offence, as would most probably suffice to give him a hearty disgust at learning in general. Whatever was the reason, it is certain that his parents freed him from the necessity of pursuing the bent of his genius under such troublesome circumstances, and he was soon afterwards placed under the care of some of the ablest artists of the time, to acquire a knowledge of the art of painting, which possessed such strong attractions for him.

When the great capital of the Roman world was sinking under the degeneracy and corruption that was working the overthrow of that vast empire, the Em-

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peror Constantine, in the 328th year of the Christian era, founded the city that still bears his name, on the site of the ancient city of Byzantium, on the narrow channel of the Bosphorus, which connects the Sea of Marmora with the Euxine or Black Sea. The choice was admirable, and in every way suited for a great commercial city, had the same wisdom characterized its government which was displayed in planting it at this connecting point, as the link between the eastern and western continents. For a time it flourished as the seat of learning and the Arts. Its imperial founder enriched it with treasures of Art taken from all parts of the Roman world, and soon made it outvie its older rival. The luxury and dissipation, as well as the seeds of decay and dissolution, that had already taken root in the huge and unwieldy Roman empire, were not to be eradicated by a change of locality of the imperial city. The enervated but still refined Greeks did indeed cultivate the Fine Arts, with a taste and enthusiasm altogether unknown among the ruder natives of the ancient Italian peninsula. Painting, sculpture, Mosaic work, and the illumination of missals, were cultivated there with ardour and considerable success. But the empire of the east was destined to rude shocks preparatory to its final overthrow. It was taken from the degenerate Greeks in the year 1204, and continued in the hands of their conquerors, the Franks, for fifty-seven years. It was then retaken by the Greeks in 1261, under the Emperor Michael Palæologus. Strange scenes were thenceforth enacted under the sway of the Greek emperors. The fanatic hordes of Crusaders, driven by the excited eloquence of Peter the Hermit, swept across the country, and perished in thousands around its walls, ere they could reach the Asiatic shores. The successors of Constantine, the Christian Emperor, bartered the key to the eastern continent for mercenary bribes, or by duplicity

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and fraud involved those emissaries of the apostles of the crusades in famine and destruction. The enervated empire of the east long trembled in the balance. At length the hour of retribution came. The fanatic hordes which had been roused by the Moslem prophet within the bosom of the Asiatic continent, swept with resistless fury across the narrow straits that divided it from Europe, and in the year 1453, the capital of the Eastern empire fell.

The invasion of Christendom by the followers of the false prophet was calculated to strike every kingdom of Europe with dismay. Its consequences, however, were altogether beneficial, and by the immense influence it exercised on the future progress of Europe, manifested in a striking manner that overruling Providence which guides the course of human affairs, and makes what seems the most adverse circumstances work out the accomplishment of beneficent designs. By this means the numerous valuable manuscripts which had been transcribed and preserved by the learned Greeks, were sent forth from their long hiding in the libraries of the convents and churches of the Eastern empire, when it was no longer able to preserve them from destruction, and were returned to the scholars of Italy and the south of Europe, just when the struggle for civil liberty against the decaying system of feudal lordship had prepared them to appreciate these treasures of ancient learning.

Along with the Greek scholars, who were driven from their native land by the invasion of Mahomet II., and by their learning and the manuscripts they brought with them, aided so largely in preparing Europe for the Reformation of the sixteenth century, there also fled into Italy numerous painters and sculptors, who also contributed towards that revival of the Arts that took place at an earlier period. The Greek painters, however, had found their way to Italy long before the final over-

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throw of Constantinople, and at the time when the youthful Giovanni Cimabue was incurring the indignant censure of the monks of Santa Maria Novella for his thoughtless defacing of their literary treasures by his crayon sketches, the church of the convent had been intrusted to some Greek artists, and was then being decorated, according to their ideas, in the highest style of the Arts.

To these Greek artists the young Cimabue was forthwith committed, as their pupil, and the progress that he made soon showed how much more congenial were their instructions, than the dull tasks of the monkish professors of Greek and Latin. The ability of these foreign artists was undoubtedly small indeed, and it is even said by Pilkington, following the early Italian historians, that they were merely employed to repair the decaying works of earlier times. "At that time," says he, "the Governor of Florence invited some ordinary Greek artists to that city, who were employed in one of the churches to repair the decayed paintings, and Cimabue, already prepossessed in favour of the art, spent whole days in observing their manner of working, to the entire neglect of his school education. So strong an attachment to those Greek painters prevailed with his father to indulge him in a study to which his genius seemed evidently to direct him; and he placed Cimabue with them as a disciple, flattering himself with a hope which appeared prophetic, that he would one day render himself remarkably eminent. He received the instructions of his masters with such eager delight, and applied himself so incessantly to practice, that in a short time he proved far superior to his directors in his taste for design and colouring, and painted with equal readiness in fresco and in distemper; not only designing historical subjects but also portraits after the life, which at that time was considered as a wonderful effort of Art." To the example thus set by him in the

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interesting field of portraiture, we owe the preservation of his own likeness, painted by his contemporary, Simone Memmi, of Sienna, on the walls of the Chapel degli Spagnuoli, in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, where the ardent youth first entered to become the pupil of its monks and its Greek painters.

It must not be supposed, however, that the bright Genius who was to win for himself the title of the Father of Italian Painting, was so entirely seduced from learning by the attractions of the Arts as to grow up a mere painter, ignorant of the treasure of sacred and profane literature from whence the future themes of his pencil were to be drawn. On the contrary, he is described by Vasari, as well studied in all the literature of his age, and proud no less of his learning than of his artistic skill. The pleasures of Art would indeed absorb his whole thoughts for a time, but he no doubt speedily discovered the value and the necessity of learning, and applied the same vigorous powers to it which mastered the difficulties of his favourite occupation. He is described indeed as exhibiting a haughty and disdainful temperament, and excessive sensitiveness of disposition. He was no less proud of his high lineage than of his reputation as an artist, and displayed both personally and in his works the bold and daring spirit of Michael Angelo, without that grace and gentleness of Raphael, which led the passionate Italians to apply to him the epithet "*divine.*"

Cimabue displayed great versatility of genius. He excelled as an architect and a Mosaic worker, no less than as a painter. He established a school at Florence from which great painters proceeded, and he especially, the glorious Giotto, who, with no proud birth, and no advantages derived from a noble ancestry, rose to the attainment of enduring and worthy fame, by his own noble genius. The enthusiasm excited by the first great

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works of Cimabue affords a characteristic illustration of the fervour of that sensitive and highly excitable people. Yet it is only when compared with the imbecile works of his predecessors that we are able to appreciate the applause of his enthusiastic fellow-countrymen. Mrs. Jamieson, the critical historian of the Italian painters, remarks of Cimabue:—He executed many pictures in the famous Church of St. Francis, at Assisi, in the decoration of which many of the best artists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were employed. "Judging from the fragments which remain, he showed a decided improvement in drawing, in dignity of attitude, and in the expression of life, but still the figures have only just so much of animation and significance as are absolutely necessary to render the story or action intelligible. There is no variety, no express imitation of nature. Being recalled by his affairs to Florence, about 1270, he painted there the most celebrated of all his works, the Madonna and infant Christ, for the Church of Santa Maria Novella. This Madonna, of a larger size than any which had been previously executed, had excited in its progress great curiosity and interest among his fellow-citizens, for Cimabue refused to uncover it to public view: but it happened about that time that Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX., being on his way to take possession of the kingdom of Naples, passed through Florence, and was received and feasted by the nobles of that city; and among other entertainments, they conducted him to visit the atelier of Cimabue, which was in a garden near the Porta Santa Piero: on this festive occasion the Madonna was uncovered, and the people in joyous crowds hurried thither to look upon it, rending the air with exclamations of delight and astonishment, whence this quarter of the city obtained and has kept ever since the name of the Borgo Allegri. The Madonna, when finished, was carried with great pomp from the atelier of the painter to the church

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for which it was destined, accompanied by the magistrates of the city, by music, and by crowds of people in solemn and festive procession. This well-known anecdote has lent a venerable charm to the picture, which is yet to be seen in the Church of Santa Maria Novella; but it is difficult in this advanced state of art to sympathise with the *naive* enthusiasm it excited in the minds of a whole people six hundred years ago. Though not without a certain grandeur, the form is very stiff, with long lean fingers and formal drapery, little varying from the Byzantine models; but the infant Christ is better, the angels on either side have a certain elegance and dignity, and the colouring in its first freshness and delicacy had a charm hitherto unknown. After this Cimabue became famous in all Italy."

Modern historians of the Italian Arts have combated the right of Cimabue to enjoy the title which has been awarded to him for centuries, of "Father of Modern Painting," and have enlarged on his haughty and disdainful manner, his proud bearing and fiery temperament; yet after all he possessed some of the most valuable characteristics of a noble and generous mind. He inspired, by his skill and enthusiasm, a hearty sympathy in the popular mind for the art which he was restoring to its true position, as a source of national instruction and high mental gratification. He devoted himself with all the energy of a powerful and well-regulated mind to attain to this noble eminence, as the instructor of his people; and he manifested at the same time that true characteristic of a generous mind, the readiness to impart his knowledge to others. He nobly paved the way for his own overthrow in the triumph of his great pupil Giotto. Let it never be forgot by those who labour to disparage his long-conceded right to the title of "Father of Modern Painting," as he who first returned to nature for the true models of art, that his claim to such is far more effectually esta-

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blished by his undisputed right to that of "*the Father of Modern Painters.*"

Cimabue was born in the dawn of a great revival, and he experienced the fate of the morning star, whose light is eclipsed in the bright morning beams. Dante, the friend of Giotto, exclaims, in his Vision of Purgatory:—

> "O powers of men! how vain your glory, nipt
> E'en in its height of verdure, if an age
> Less bright succeed not. Cimabue thought
> To lord it over painting's field; and now
> The cry is Giotto's, and his name eclipsed."

Nevertheless Cimabue enjoyed, while he lived, all the honours and rewards that await upon worthy achievements. He lived chiefly at Florence, but his fame extended throughout the kingdoms of Italy, and he attained the age of sixty, honoured as one of whom his country might be proud. He died in his native city about the year 1302,—for the exact date has not been noted by his biographers,—and was borne in honourable procession to the Church of Santa Maria del Fore, where he lies interred. The following brief but pointed epitaph was inscribed on his tomb, in proof of the high estimation that was awarded to him—

> "Cimabue thought he held the mastery over the field of painting;
> So did he, living;—now he holds his place among the stars of heaven."

The countenance of Cimabue, as represented in the portrait of him still preserved in the Church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, exhibits a noble and manly expression, though disfigured with the ridiculous monk's hood, which is so frequent an appendage to the likenesses of the early poets and painters of Italy. The profile is beautifully moulded, yet with a very marked expression of thought, tinged in a slight degree with the aristocratic hauteur which is ascribed to him. However the modern connoisseur may smile at the enthusiasm of the early Flor-

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entines, bearing the Madonna of Cimabue in festive triumph, amid music, and the shouts of the applauding populace, to the church whose altar it was destined to adorn, there can be no question that Cimabue was one of the foremost to give that impetus to Italian Art which finally led on to such noble results. Bearing in view the noble enthusiasm by which he was stimulated in early years, and the generosity with which he imparted his acquirements to others,—of which our next chapter presents a more ample illustration,—it were hard indeed to rob him of the fame he has so long enjoyed, because the impetus he gave to the Arts was followed by a corresponding and progressive triumph.

CHAPTER II.

GIOTTO.

GIOVANNI Cimabue, the haughty descendant of the nobles of Florence, strolling one day through the lovely Campagna that stretches around his native city beneath the lovely blue Italian sky, was attracted by the intentness with which a young shepherd boy was poring over a piece of slate which he held in his hand. The painter drew near, and was surprised to find that the young peasant was drawing, by means of a bit of pointed stone, a picture of one of his sheep, which grazed at a little distance. The sketch was vigorous and correct, for Giotto, the peasant-boy, had long amused himself, and beguiled his tedious and half-idle hours, while tending his flocks on the Campagna, by sketching figures and objects of any kind that attracted his notice. Cimabue was astonished and delighted at the performance of the untutored boy, and asked him if he would accompany him to Florence,

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and learn the art for which he showed so intuitive a capacity. We can fancy the delight with which the eager yet bashful boy would seize on the proffered opportunity of following out the delightful amusements of his idle hours, and exchanging the shepherd's crook for the pencil and the palette of the painter. Giotto declared himself well content to follow the generous stranger to the neighbouring city, and become his pupil and assistant in the noble art. The father of the boy, a humble herdsman of the name of Rondone, who tended his flocks in the valley of Vespignano, was appealed to by Cimabue, and gladly consented that his son should follow him, and forsake the flocks of the Campagna, which had served for his earliest study.

The memory of this picturesque and interesting story still lingers as a pleasing association with these broad Italian plains. Imagination pictures there the earnest shepherd-boy, absorbed in his self-taught art, while his flocks are spreading abroad to graze on the rich verdure that surrounds him. Rogers, in his delightful Italian scenes, at once associates the peasant Giotto and the noble of Florence with the Campagna, as he exclaims—

> "'Tis morning. Let us wander through the fields
> Where Cimabue found a shepherd boy,
> Tracing his idle fancies on the ground;
> And let us from the top of Fiesole,
> Whence Galileo's glass by night observed
> The phases of the moon, look round below
> On Arno's vale, where the dove-coloured steer
> Is ploughing up and down among the vines,
> While many a careless note is sung aloud,
> Filling the air with sweetness—and on thee,
> Beautiful FLORENCE."

Here at least our obligations to Cimabue are unquestionable. If we owe the less to him as an artist, we are the more deeply indebted to him as the generous patron who

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drew from poverty and obscurity the genius who has exercised so wide and enduring an influence on the Arts, and with no niggard or jealous hand lavished on him all the aid and instruction which it was his fortune to be able to bestow. Honoured be the name of the noble Florentine, who by his generosity linked his name with that of the gifted peasant whose works and influence so far eclipsed his own.

There is something peculiarly significant in the employment in which we find Giotto engaged while tending his flocks. He was to restore to the Arts the grace and beauty of nature, which had altogether disappeared from the traditional forms of the Greek painters, and which had obtained very slight aid from the bolder advances of his master. We find him in the Campagna, with nature for his model, not seeking to discover in his own untutored fancy an inventive faculty that should supersede the grace and beauty of nature, but turning to her, as the true painter and the true poet will ever do, in her simplest and most familiar forms.

Cimabue having undertaken the education of the shepherd-boy, neglected no means to accomplish the object he aimed at, of training him up as his successor in the noble art. Giotto was not then fourteen years of age, and no doubt entirely destitute of all learning. To this therefore his noble patron first directed his attention, and placed him for instruction in the scholarship which was then most in repute, under the care of Brunetto Latini, the same teacher to whom the nobly-born Dante was committed for the acquirement of those branches of learning necessary to fit him for his destined duties as a leader and magistrate of Florence.

Very little information is preserved to us of the intercourse between Cimabue and Giotto, in their mutual relations of friend and pupil. There is every reason, however, for believing that it was altogether pleasing and

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satisfactory. Giotto was at the age of twenty-six when he lost his friend and master. He was already celebrated as a painter, and his society sought by the most influential men of his time. Doubtless, among the crowd of friends and fellow-citizens that followed the noble Florentine to his tomb in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, where he had first been attracted by the labours of the Greek decorators, none mourned his loss more deeply and sincerely than the great artist who owed to his generous patronage his introduction to learning and the Arts, and to the society of the noble and honoured among the citizens of Florence. Cimabue's generosity doubtless met an ample reward in the success of his pupil, but he was otherwise repaid for his kindness. Mrs. Jamieson, who has visited Italy, and examined the works of its early painters with the zeal of an enthusiast, guided by a sound discriminating taste, remarks:—"When Giotto lost his friend and master he was already an accomplished man as well as a celebrated painter, and the influence of his large original mind upon the later works of Cimabue is distinctly to be traced."

Giotto was speedily engaged on the most important public works, and rapidly improved in grace and beauty of expression. In many of his paintings he has introduced the portraits of eminent contemporaries, and to this practice, exhibited in one of his very earliest public efforts, we owe the preservation of a singularly interesting likeness of the great poet Dante in his youthful years, while yet the bright visions of love and hope were present in his mind, and he shared in the honours and the duties of a noble citizen of Florence. "The first recorded performance of Giotto," says the historian of the early Italian painters, "was a painting on the wall of the Palazzo della Podestà, or council-chamber of Florence, in which were introduced the portraits of Dante, Brunetto Latini, Corso Donati, and others. Vasari speaks of these

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works as the first successful attempts at portraiture in the history of modern Art. They were soon afterwards plastered or whitewashed over during the triumph of the enemies of Dante; and for ages, though known to exist, they were lost and buried from sight. The hope of recovering these most interesting portraits had long been entertained, and various attempts had been made at different times without success, till at length, as late as 1840, they were brought to light by the perseverance and enthusiasm of Mr. Bezzi, an Italian gentleman, now residing in England. On comparing the head of Dante, painted when he was about thirty, prosperous and distinguished in his native city, with the later portraits of him when an exile, worn, wasted, embittered by misfortune and disappointment and wounded pride, the difference of expression is as touching as the identity in feature is indubitable.

The attention which in his childhood Giotto seems to have given to all natural forms and appearances, showed itself in his earlier pictures; he was the first to whom it occurred to group his personages into something like a situation, and to give to their attitudes and features the expression adapted to it: thus, in a very early picture of the Annunciation he gave to the virgin a look of fear; and in another, painted some time afterwards, of the Presentation in the Temple, he made the Infant Christ shrink from the priest, and turning, extend his little arms to his mother—the first attempt at that species of grace and naïveté of expression afterwards carried to perfection by Raffaelle. These and other works painted in his native city so astonished his fellow-citizens, and all who beheld them, by their beauty and novelty, that they seem to have wanted adequate words in which to express the excess of their delight and admiration, and insisted that the figures of Giotto so completely beguiled the sense that they were mistaken for realities;"—a common-place

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eulogium, the author justly adds, merited only by the most common-place and mechanical painters. Nevertheless it must be regarded as the honest though ill-expressed language of admiration which his performances elicited from his fellow-countrymen.

The fame of Giotto soon spread through Italy, and the high character of his works exercised its influence on the taste of the age. The reputation of his marvellous skill extended to the court of Rome, and a messenger was despached by the Pope to invite him there. The papal throne was at this time occupied by the haughty and turbulent Benedetto Gaetani, who succeeded Celestine V., in 1294, and assumed the title of Boniface VIII. The history of this early patron of the Arts abounds with some of the most remarkable of those strange and frightful manifestations of vice and unrestrained ambition which so frequently mark the history of that succession of priestly rulers who claim their office as the heirs of St. Peter. Celestine had only held that coveted summit of earthly grandeur and power for a few months, when he was persuaded by the Cardinal Gaetani to abdicate, on the ground of incapacity. No sooner had Gaetani stepped into the throne of his wretched dupe than he committed him a prisoner to the Castle of Fumone, where he died shortly afterwards, as was generally believed, of famine. Boniface was one of the most haughty asserters of the supremacy of the Pope over all kings and nations, no less in temporal than in spiritual affairs. He was the first to grant those plenary indulgences as the reward of a pilgrimage to Rome, which had previously been reserved as the exclusive prize of those who perilled their lives for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre from the Infidels; and by this means he brought vast sums of money into the Roman treasury. Boniface, however, soon involved himself in a contest that demanded all the wealth of the Church's coffers to carry it out. His Legate to France,—

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a minion for whom he had created a bishopric within that kingdom, without the French King's consent,—behaved with such insolence to the French monarch, Philip le Bel, that he commanded his arrest. Upon this Boniface excommunicated the King, placed his kingdom under interdict, and wrote to Albert of Austria, declaring him King by right of his supreme authority, and inviting him to make war against France. Philip assembled the states of the kingdom, and laid before them a series of charges against his haughty opponent; accusing him of simony, heresy, licentiousness, and sorcery; and appealing against him to a general council. Such was Pope Boniface VIII., whose messenger arrived at Florence to invite the rising artist, Giotto, to visit his Holiness at Rome.

A curious anecdote is related of the first interview between Giotto and the messenger of the Pope. The latter was apparently as fully impressed with the greatness and condescension of his Holiness, and of the importance of his messenger, as the French Legate, whose haughtiness involved his master in a struggle that only ended with his life. It no doubt appeared to him an act of favour on the part of the Pope requiring the possession of very peculiar and rare gifts in Giotto to account for it; and he accordingly demanded that the artist should produce in his presence some evidence of his skill that would satisfy him he was the person whom the Pope desired to see. Giotto immediately produced a piece of paper, and with a single sweep of his pencil produced a circle so perfect "that it appeared a miracle to behold." The anecdote must be regarded as furnishing no less conclusive evidence of the simplicity of the age, and the very slight advances that the predecessors of Giotto had made in the Arts, than of the skill and freedom with which Giotto could handle his pencil. Nevertheless, it was at once accepted by the messenger of Pope Boniface as an indisputable proof of his pre-eminent talents, and

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the story has passed into a familiar Italian proverb: — "Rounder than the O of Giotto," meaning thereby an impossibility.

Whatever may have been the inferences deduced from this feat of Giotto's pencil, he proceeded forthwith to Rome, and produced there incontrovertible evidence of his high genius. He was employed to decorate the ancient Basilica of St. Peter's—the Cathedral Church which was demolished to make way for the gorgeous edifice whose dome now towers high above the churches and palaces of the Roman capital. It must be borne in remembrance that at that early period the art of painting in oil was altogether unknown. Pictures were then frequently painted in fresco, an art derived from the practice of the ancient Greeks, in which carefully selected colours were laid on the wet plaster with no other vehicle than water, and, hardening along with the plaster, they became thoroughly incorporated with it, so as to be destructible only with the wall on which they were traced. By another process, styled by the Italians *a tempera*, and which is known in England by the name of *distemper painting*, the colours were mixed with water, thickened with the white of egg, or the juice derived from the young shoots of the fig-tree. The surface in this case was generally well-seasoned board; and by this means all the moveable pictures of the early Italian artists were executed, for nearly two centuries. Another process, however, by which extensive works for decorating the walls and ceilings of churches and large public buildings were executed, was Mosaic, where the colouring is produced by means of numerous small pieces of pebble, coloured glass, or marbles, producing an effect somewhat similar to tapestry or ladies' worsted work. It was by means of the latter process that Giotto executed his celebrated picture of the *Navicella*, or ship; an allegorical design intended to represent the vessel of the Church passing through all

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the dangers and vicissitudes with which its course is beset, and rejoicing in the triumphs that it achieves.

Since the days of Giotto, the venerable Basilica, or old Church, has disappeared, or been buried beneath the mighty fabric of St. Peter's, which took more than a century to complete, and employed in its progress some of the greatest Geniuses that have adorned the revival of the Arts. It engaged the genius and tasked the resources of Bramante, San Gallo, Raphael, Peruzzi, Michael Angelo and his pupil, Barozzi; with others of great though inferior note. It taxed no less the energies of the bold and unscrupulous pontiffs, Julius II., Leo X., and Paul III.,—names memorable in the history of the REFORMATION, no less than in that of the revival of Art. When we consider that it was to secure the treasures required to rear this gorgeous fabric, that Tetzel was sent forth on his scandalous mission for the sale of indulgences; and that it was to stay such unhallowed imposture that Luther's voice was first heard, and his first journey undertaken to Rome; we learn to look on the magnificent and matchless fabric of St. Peter's as a monument of that mighty movement by which the papal usurpation was shorn of its most cherished assumptions. To return, however, to our more legitimate theme:—The old Basilica, a large structure, measuring above 300 feet in length, has been swept away, all but a small portion that is preserved as a subterraneous vault under the pavement of the modern building. Nevertheless, the singular allegory wrought by Giotto at the close of the thirteenth century, still remains. It is now in the vestibule of the modern Cathedral, an object of singular interest to every student of the history of the Arts, and of their revival in modern Europe. A ship is seen, tossed on a tempestuous sea. The winds which rage around the beleaguered vessel are personified as demons, characterized by the utmost hideousness of form, and by every variety of malignant

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expression. The vessel is freighted with the Apostles, the Fathers of the New Testament Church, while over head are seen the Patriarchs and Prophets who heralded and longed for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. Foremost of all, on the right side of the picture, Christ appears walking on the sea, and stretching forth his hand to rescue the Apostle Peter, who sinks faithless, affrighted at the winds and waves.

Such was the teaching vouchsafed to the ardent Italians at that early period, by the great reviver of the Arts. The allegory is a noble one. The lesson it might be expected to teach is altogether such as we would wish still to communicate to the gay triflers who luxuriate in that sunny clime beneath Italy's soft blue skies; but the Arts, though a refining and ennobling study, never have proved very effective moral teachers, for all that sanguine enthusiasts seek to prove. The *Navicella* of Giotto, the ship of the Church, has been watched with interest by thousands, generation after generation; but few, if any, have ever thought while gazing on it, of the strange contrast between that tempest-tossed barque with the trembling disciples, and the fainting Peter reaching forth for safety to the Saviour's hand; and the vast hierarchy, with its haughty pontiff, its luxurious cardinals and bishops, and all the attendants of unrestrained ambition and shameless license, claiming to be that Church which Christ sent forth as the world's ark to breast the tempests of ages.

We shall see, however, in the further history of the Arts, the same curious question returning, as to their power and influence as instruments for the moral teaching of the nations.

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CHAPTER III.

SYMBOLISM.

We have already alluded to the painting of the Greek artists during the first ages of Christianity; but the origin of the early Christian painting and of the peculiar models of Byzantine Art which exercised so great an influence on its revivers in Italy, is a subject possessing very high interest for us. We find in its history, indeed, a very striking index of the changing phases of the Church, and of the motives that actuated its teachers in the gradual development of that system that had attained to a definite and established formula before the Arts again appeared, in the fourteenth century, pregnant with as intense vitality as that which possessed the genius of Greek Art in the age of Pericles.

There can be no question that the models of ancient Art, the magnificent works of the great sculptors of Greece, exercised a very great and beneficial influence on the progress of the Arts, when they revived in Europe, towards the close of the thirteenth century; nevertheless, it must be borne in remembrance that Christian Art, as it has been styled, originated in an entirely different source, beginning at the rudiments, and progressing altogether independent of these ancient models, until the period referred to. Frequent allusion has been made to the Greek artists as the earliest Italian painters, and the first instructors of Cimabue; but these must not be confounded with the descendants of Zeuxis or Apelles. They were chiefly the monkish limners and illuminators, who found protection and encouragement at the luxurious court of Constantinople, long after incessant wars and famine had driven them from the distracted kingdom of Italy. The

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early Christians, when they began to employ the Arts in the decoration of their churches, were strangely divided between their desire for appropriate adornment and their dread of any thing that should seem to sanction the idolatrous erection of images in the heathen temples. The interpretation of the second commandment was as rigidly exclusive of all making of images among the early Christians, as it ever had been among the Jews; and many of the fathers, as Tertullian, in his discourse "De Idololatria," inveigh against artists as the practisers of an infamous occupation, and write of them very much in the style in which stage-players have been regarded by the Romish Church in a later age. It is a curious fact that it is only by a decree of the present Pope, that the latter class are permitted to be buried in consecrated ground.

Even after the Fine Arts had been partially admitted as a fit means for decorating places of worship, decrees of councils were again and again passed against representations of our Saviour; and the earliest authorities on the subject expressly condemn all imitative art as an approach to heathen idolatry. They were accordingly confined to those mystic emblems which form a subsidiary feature in the later decorations of Christian architecture, and which the superstitious veneration of some modern theologians for what they regard as *Primitive Christianity* has led them to aim at reviving. These sacred symbols, which were at first few and simple, gradually increased with the natural demand for variety and increasing power in this novel language of instruction. The monogram of Christ, variously written, was one of the earliest. To this was added the cross, signifying *Redemption;* the fish, *Baptism;* the lamb, *our Saviour;* the dove, *the Holy Spirit;* the serpent or dragon, *Sin;* the ship, *the Church;* and many others derived from the same source; as the cock, the palm, the vine-branch, the anchor, the spear and nails, the cup, &c. This was in fact to create a new language

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by which to communicate ideas to the people; but, as might have been expected, it speedily proved too straitened for their demands, and the Church was content to condemn the idolatry, while it made use of the means it had formerly denounced as directly leading to it. "The great change," says R. N. Wornum, in his History of Painting, "respecting the toleration of images which took place in the third and fourth centuries was doubtless owing to the rapidly increasing stability of Christianity; it could afford to be tolerant: the result however justified the fears of the early dignitaries of the Church, and for many centuries the principal ecclesiastics protested against the growing abuse of images, pictorial as well as plastic. The Gnostics appear to have been the first who had recourse to their use. The churches were painted to a considerable extent, probably as early as the beginning of the fourth century. The first notice of this use of painting occurs in a canon of the Council held at Illiberis (Granada) in Spain about 305 A. D., which decreed that there should be no images in the churches, and that that which was revered and adored should not be painted on the walls—a Canon which has since been explained as referring only to the Trinity, and not to saints or martyrs, as these were not adored.

Towards the close of the fourth century images appear to have increased; an interesting letter of Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, to John, Bishop of Jerusalem, is preserved by St. Jerome, and in it the following remarkable passage occurs:—'On my journey through Anablata, a village in Palestine, I found a curtain at the door of the church, on which was painted a figure of Christ or some saint, I forget which. As I saw that it was the image of a man, which is against the command of the Scriptures, I tore it down, and gave it to the church authorities, with the advice to use it as a winding sheet for the next poor person who might have occasion for one, and bury it.'

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Many other notices however occur in the Greek and Latin writers of the fourth century which show that the dread of a restoration of Paganism through the influence of images had very generally ceased; and in some instances the painters are even exhorted to celebrate the glories of the martyrs with their colours.

Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, introduced paintings into two churches of St. Felix which he built at Nola and at Fondi at the close of this century; and these paintings were probably among the earliest decorations of their class in Italy. The reason given by the Bishop for these decorations is remarkable and highly creditable to him. Drunkenness appears to have been a common vice of that period; and the annual celebration of the festivals of the saints, by bringing many illiterate people together, was the immediate cause of many gross excesses and debauchery. To mitigate this disgraceful state, Paulinus had recourse to the decoration of the churches with Bible stories and illustrations of the lives of the martyrs, trusting by this means to elevate the feeling of the populace, and to draw them from their gross sensuality to the contemplation of a higher state, and to a more worthy expenditure of their leisure hours. It was a noble effort at popular education by the best means probably in his power; but his success was doubtless little commensurate with his intentions.

Throughout the fifth century it became a gradually more prevalent custom to decorate the churches erected in honour of the saints with illustrations of their martyrdoms, in colours and in Mosaics; the latter style became eventually preferred as more durable, and being more costly, it was a greater evidence of devotion—not to the saint, but to the cause in which he suffered.

Sixtus III., and Leo the Great or St. Leo, are conspicuous among the first who carried this mode of decoration to a magnificent degree: the great apsis of the choir

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of the Church of St. Paul, outside the walls of Rome, is still adorned with the Mosaics executed by the order of Leo: similar works were executed for Hilarius in the Church of St. John on the Lateran, and Simplicius decorated that of Santa Maria Maggiore at Rome. The example of these Popes was followed by the Emperor Maximian at Ravenna; the Mosaics executed by his orders in the Church of St. Stephen still exist.

All these works, as well as many others that have perished, were executed in the fifth century; from which it is evident that at this time it was a general practice to decorate the churches with pictures and statues; and the artists of the period must have been considerably numerous, though wholly unknown at present. The grosser form of Christian idolatry commenced from this period; a populace unable to read, and obsessed by a superstition commensurate with its ignorance, was not likely to appreciate exactly the nature or purport of these images which their bishops had set up; and instead of examples of fortitude and incentives to a higher intellectuality, they were looked upon as holy images and mediators, and, from mere moral records or spiritual symbols, were converted into material saints, and became the objects of gross idolatry. What earlier prelates had foreseen and warned against in vain, was in vain resisted by contemporary dignitaries of the Church; and notwithstanding several edicts of Councils against the adoration of images, their use gradually prevailed, and, surviving all the efforts of the Iconoclasts in the eighth and ninth centuries, finally triumphed throughout the whole of Christendom, both in the western and in the eastern empire."

The progressive movement of the Church, however, from the mere hieroglyphic symbols to the actual admission of pictorial representations of our Saviour, the Virgin, &c., was not the abandonment of the one for the

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other, but only the extension of the former, and the adoption of more intelligible symbols.

The Saviour and the Virgin and Child were only more comprehensive emblems of redemption; the Blessed Virgin, as the Queen of Heaven, was undoubtedly at first intended as typical of RELIGION; and we find them very early having recourse to the classic fables, and adopting Orpheus, Apollo, Pluto, &c., to express corresponding ideas in the Scripture narrative, or in the legends of the Church

From this hasty review of the early stages of Christian Art, the reader will be better able to understand the choice of subject adopted by Giotto for his first great work in the Basilica of St. Peter's. The ship, we have seen, was early adopted as an emblem of the Church, being, in fact, only another use of one of the types of Old Testament history. If we are to regard the great Italian painter, like his contemporary and friend Dante, as a teacher of the people by means of his art, we must look upon the picture of the *Navicella*, as a sermon written up before them from the story of the deluge, wherein they are warned of the mighty waste of waters that covers the heathen world, from whence there is no safety but in the ark of Christ's Church. Demons, even temptations, vices, and horrible lusts, assail it on every side; it is in the midst of a dark and howling tempest that threatens to overwhelm it. Nevertheless, its guides are the apostles and martyrs of the Church; its crew are the true believers; and such is the beneficence and power of its Captain, Christ, that even amid that dread abyss of waters,—the chaos of sin which the unregenerate world presents around it,—the disciple may venture forth to walk to Jesus, who stretches out his hand to save him from perishing. Such is the sermon that Giotto's Mosaic was meant by him to express: but, alas! the

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Church he pointed to was no ark of safety, and the tempest then gathering amid such thick darkness that few indeed saw the True Ark, amid that waste of waters.

So peculiar and enduring has been the influence of this symbolic origin of Christian Art, that it has established a fixed form of countenance for Christ and the chief apostles, and has even been followed so closely as in many cases to adhere to the assigned colours of their robes. Various singular traditions are related by some of the early fathers to give authority to some of these practices. Previous to the final adoption of this standard, some singular discussions took place among the divines of the early church relative to it. The prophetic language of Isaiah was made the basis of more than one view of the subject; and a very important controversy, so far as the Arts are concerned, was originated by St. Cyril, from the prophet's description of the Messiah:—"He shall grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." This, it was insisted, was what the painter must realize, and consequently the Saviour must be represented altogether devoid of beauty, and in the most unattractive form. The language of Art, however, is so opposed to this idea, that had such a conception been insisted upon, it must have led to the abandonment of such representations altogether. The Pope Adrian I., and many of the fathers of that early age, refused to trammel the Arts by so literal an interpretation of the language of prophecy, and thenceforth the artist was encouraged to aim at the most exalted impersonation of manly beauty. Another passage from the same prophet however gave form to the symbolic character in which Christ was at first chiefly represented:—"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." As-

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suming this as the guiding thought, our Saviour appears in nearly all the earliest paintings in the character of a shepherd.

Most of our readers are no doubt familiar with a spurious letter pretending to be written by Lentulus, a Roman officer in Judæa, to the Roman Senate, giving an account of Christ, and a minute description of his personal appearance. The letter is obviously a monkish forgery of the most barefaced description. It does not appear to have been known earlier than the eleventh century, and may be considered rather as embodying a description of the style of expression adopted by the artists before that time, than as having given the law to later painters. However this may be, it corresponds to the early portraits of Christ, and to that style of expression which has ever since been adhered to. He is there described as—"A man of stately figure, dignified in appearance, with a countenance inspiring veneration, and which those who look upon it may love as well as fear. His hair, rather dark and glossy, falls down in curls below his shoulders, and is parted in the middle after the manner of the Nazarenes. The forehead is smooth and remarkably serene; the face without line or spot, and agreeably ruddy. The nose and mouth are faultless; the beard is thick and reddish, of the colour of the hair, not long, but divided; the eyes bright, and of a varied colour."

But far more ingenious are some of the superstitious inventions which this spirit of religious embodyment of the church's dogmas by means of pictorial art gave rise to. One story affirmed that on that eventful day when the ancient ceremonial law was about to be abrogated by the sacrifice of Him whom all previous sacrifices had foreshadowed as types or emblems, a strange miracle was wrought by our Saviour to perpetuate the remembrance of his humanity. As he toiled along the steep path that led to the rock of Calvary where all was to be *finished*,

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one of the women who followed him, weeping over his sufferings, presented to him a handkerchief with which to wipe the great drops of sweat from his face; and on receiving it back again, it was found to bear an exact picture of the Saviour's face! Such was the monkish legend, and in proof of it, they professed to produce the identical cloth with the divine countenance thus miraculously impressed upon it. It is hardly to be wondered at that so marvellous a legend should have been received with credulous admiration by the ignorant and superstitious worshippers of the middle ages, and accordingly the gross idolatry to which it gave rise excited the indignation of some of the early councils of the Church. Nearly akin to this is another tradition, which is thus related in the History of Painting:—"Abgarus, King of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, who was confined from sickness, from which the treatment of his physicians gave him no relief, having heard of the miracles performed by Christ in Judæa, sent a messenger to him to invite him to come to Edessa to cure him of his complaint. This messenger was a certain Ananias, who was a painter, and Abgarus had ordered him that, if he could not persuade Christ to come to him, he was at least to bring his portrait. Ananias delivered his letter, and on account of the crowd around him retired to an eminence close by, and there attempted to make a drawing of his face. This, either owing to Christ's repeated movements, or, as Damascenus says, the refulgence of his countenance, he found it impossible to do. Christ himself, however, accomplished his purpose for him: having called for water to wash his face with, he wiped it with a linen cloth, which he gave, with an answer for Abgarus, to Ananias, who found Christ's likeness imprinted on it. Abgarus, as he had anticipated, was cured by the touch of this portrait, and it became afterwards an object of universal veneration at Edessa, until it was removed to Constan-

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tinople by Nicephorus Phocas, in the second year of his reign, A.D. 964. It was subsequently carried to Rome, where it is still preserved in the church of San Silvestro in Capite."

Such are some of the strange superstitions which no doubt exercised an influence on the Arts, and helped to determine the form of expression since adhered to. But the Byzantine painters were no less conventional in form than in feature; wandering in this respect wide apart from nature, and thereby rendering the revival of Art the more remarkable in the hands of such eminent geniuses as Giotto, who adhered to the time-honoured forms and expression of these rude and lifeless draftsmen, and yet infused into them life and spirit, and expanded the type of the Divine Countenance, and of the apostles' features, into that sweet grace and beauty which has led him to be compared with the great Raphael, his pre-eminent successor in the same glorious art.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WORKS OF GIOTTO.

GIOTTO had now attained the highest reputation as an artist, and had called into being a lively sympathy for the Arts, by means of his own creative genius. He executed other important works for Pope Boniface, one of which, the Institution of the Jubilee of 1300, still remains on the Lateran at Rome. From thence Giotto proceeded to Padua, where he engaged in new, and extensive works, many of which still remain, and are described by those who have examined them, as wonderful for the variety and the inventive genius displayed in them. At Padua Giotto met with his friend Dante, and to his fertile fancy

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it has been supposed by some that Giotto was indebted for some of the suggestions he has embodied with so much vigour. It is probably hardly necessary to adopt such an idea, as the great painter was undoubtedly well able to conceive, as well as to execute, the works that still remain as evidence of the great vigour and masterly power of his pencil. Nevertheless, it is an interesting idea to conceive of the great Italian poet, for ever banished from his "beautiful Florence," communing with the Florentine painter, and discussing with him the treatment of those vigorous pictures that still adorn the crypt of the Chapel of Arena at Padua. The name of Giotto will ever be pleasingly associated with that of the great Italian poet, as he who has preserved to us a living memorial of him in those young and happy years, while yet hope and love mingled with his ambition, and he shared in the honours and the sympathy of his fellow-countrymen.

Giotto's fame now led his aid to be courted for the decoration of every important public edifice in Italy, nor must we forget, while thus describing his triumphant progress as a painter, that he excelled in other arts no less. The taste of the Italian architects early led them to separate the belfry from the body of the church, so as to admit of its receiving any amount of ornament, and being raised to any degree of elevation, without being greatly subjected to the proportions of the building of which it forms an appendage. The consequence of this happy practice has been the erection of numerous Campanili, or bell-towers, throughout Italy, many of them of great elevation, and singular beauty. Foremost among all these Campanili, is the magnificent tower designed by Giotto for the Cathedral of Florence. It is universally pronounced by far the most elegant bell-tower in Italy, though not so lofty as that of Cremona. It is 267 feet high, and was constructed by Giotto in 1324.

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The plan is a perfect square, forty-five feet on each side. Externally it is divided into five compartments or stories, each of them differing entirely from the others; and internally there are six floors, each of which is vaulted with stone. The style is an Italianized Gothic, bearing considerable resemblance in its details to that which was adopted by Sir Christopher Wren in the west towers of Westminster Abbey and elsewhere. Though in this respect it is a work of art open to the criticism of those who insist on a rigid adherence to the established examples of early architecture, it nevertheless fully merits all the encomiums it has received as a work of singular grace and beauty. Giotto, it is said, designed an elegant spire, eighty-five feet in height, which was intended to surmount the tower. It is now finished, with a nearly flat roof, which is not seen from below.

The following interesting account from Mrs. Jamieson's Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters contains a sketch of the latter years of his life, including some curious details we have not met with elsewhere:—"By the time Giotto had attained his thirtieth year, he had reached such hitherto unknown excellence in Art, and his celebrity was so universal, that every city and every petty sovereign in Italy contended for the honour of his presence and his pencil, and tempted him with the promise of rich rewards. For the lords of Arezzo, of Rimini, and Ravenna, and for the Duke of Milan, he executed many works, now almost wholly perished. Castruccio Castricani, the warlike tyrant of Lucca, also employed him; but how Giotto was induced to listen to the offers of this enemy of his country is not explained. Perhaps Castruccio, as the head of the Ghibelline party, in which Giotto had apparently enrolled himself, appeared in the light of a friend rather than an enemy: however this may be, a picture which Giotto painted for Castruccio, and in which he introduced the portrait of the tyrant, with a

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falcon on his fist, is still preserved in the Lyceum at Lucca. For Guido da Polente, the father of that hapless Francesca di Rimini, whose story is so beautifully told by Dante, he painted the interior of a church; and for Malatesta di Rimini, (who was father of Francesca's husband,) he painted the portrait of that prince in a bark, with his companions and a company of mariners; and among them, Vasari tells us, was the figure of a sailor, who, turning round with his hand before his face, is in the act of spitting in the sea, so life-like as to strike the beholders with amazement. This has perished; but the figure of the thirsty man stooping to drink, in one of the frescoes at Assisi, still remains, to show the kind of excellence through which Giotto excited such admiration in his contemporaries;—a power of imitation, a truth in the expression of natural actions and feelings, to which painting had never yet ascended or descended. This leaning to the actual and the real has been made a subject of reproach. to which we shall hereafter refer.

It is said, but this does not rest on very satisfactory evidence, that Giotto also visited Avignon, in the train of Pope Clement V., and painted there the portraits of Petrarch and Laura.

About the year 1327, King Robert of Naples, the father of Queen Joanna, wrote to his son the Duke of Calabria, then at Florence, to send to him, on any terms, the famous painter Giotto, who accordingly travelled to the court of Naples, stopping on his way in several cities, where he left specimens of his skill. He also visited Orvieto for the purpose of viewing the sculpture with which the brothers Agostino and Agnolo were decorating the cathedral, and not only bestowed on it high commendation, but obtained for the artists the praise and patronage they merited. There is at Gaeta a Crucifixion painted by Giotto, either on his way to Naples or on his return, in which he introduced himself kneeling in an attitude of

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deep devotion and contrition at the foot of the cross. This introduction of portraiture into a subject so awful was another innovation, not so praiseworthy as some of his alterations. Giotto's feeling for truth and propriety of expression is particularly remarkable and commendable in the alteration of the dreadful, but popular subject of the crucifix: in the Byzantine school, the sole aim seems to have been to represent physical agony, and to render it, by every species of distortion and exaggeration, as terrible and repulsive as possible. Giotto was the first to soften this awful and painful figure by an expression of divine resignation, and by greater attention to beauty of form. A Crucifixion painted by him became the model for his scholars, and was multiplied by imitation through all Italy; so that a famous painter of crucifixes after the Greek fashion, Margaritone, who had been a friend and contemporary of Cimabue, confounded by the introduction of this new method of art, which he partly disdained and partly despaired to imitate, and old enough to hate innovations of all kinds, took to his bed through vexation, and so died.

But to return to Giotto, whom we left on the road to Naples. King Robert received him with great honour and rejoicing, and being a monarch of singular accomplishments, and fond of the society of learned and distinguished men, he soon found that Giotto was not merely a painter, but a man of the world, a man of various acquirements, whose general reputation for wit and vivacity was not unmerited. He would sometimes visit the painter at his work, and, while watching the rapid progress of his pencil, amused himself with the quaint good sense of his discourse. 'If I were you, Giotto,' said the king to him one very hot day, 'I would leave off work and rest myself:' 'And so would I, sire,' replied the painter, 'if I were *you!*' The King, in a playful mood, desired him to paint his kingdom, on which Giotto im-

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mediately sketched the figure of an ass with a heavy pack-saddle on his back, smelling with an eager air at another pack-saddle lying on the ground, on which were a crown and sceptre. By this emblem the satirical painter expressed the servility and the fickleness of the Neapolitans, and the King at once understood the allusion.

While at Naples Giotto painted in the church of the Incoronati a series of frescoes representing the Seven Sacraments according to the Roman ritual. These still exist, and are amongst the most authentic and best preserved of his works. The Sacrament of Marriage contains many female figures, beautifully designed and grouped, with graceful heads and flowing draperies. This picture is traditionally said to represent the marriage of Joanna of Naples and Louis of Taranto; but Giotto died in 1336, and these famous espousals took place in 1347; a dry date will sometimes confound a very pretty theory. In the Sacrament of Ordination, there is a group of chanting-boys, in which the various expressions of the act of singing are given with that truth of imitation which made Giotto the wonder of his day. His paintings from the Apocalypse in the Church of Santa Chiara were whitewashed over, about two centuries ago, by a certain prior of the convent, because, in the opinion of this barbarian, *they made the church look dark!*

Giotto quitted Naples about the year 1328, and returned to his native city with great increase of riches and fame. He continued his works with unabated application, assisted by his pupils, for his school was now the most famous in Italy. Like most of the early Italian artists, he was an architect and sculptor, as well as a painter; and his last public work was the famous Campanile or Bell-tower at Florence, founded in 1334, for which he made all the designs, and even executed with his own hand the models for the sculpture on the three lower divisions.

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According to Kugler, they form a regular series of subjects illustrating the development of human culture, through religion and laws, 'conceived,' says the same authority, 'with profound wisdom.' When the Emperor Charles V. saw this elegant structure, he exclaimed that it ought to be 'kept under glass.' In the same allegorical taste Giotto painted many pictures of the Virtues and Vices, ingeniously invented and rendered with great attention to natural and appropriate expression. In these and similar representations we trace distinctly the influence of the genius of Dante. A short time before his death he was invited to Milan by Azzo Visconti. He executed some admirable frescoes in the ancient palace of the Dukes of Milan, but these have perished."

Giotto thus continued to be courted by the most eminent for wealth and rank, and to employ his genius in decorating the churches and cities of Italy with his great works. At length he returned to Florence, laden with honours, and the substantial rewards that await upon such complete success. He died in that city in the year 1336, in the 61st year of his age, and was buried in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, to which he had followed the remains of his master, Cimabue, thirty-five years before.

CHAPTER V.

THE FRIENDS OF GIOTTO.

THE character of Giotto, when considered in connection with the period in which he accomplished so great a revolution in Arts, affords a subject well deserving as careful an examination as our knowledge of the subject will admit. When we reflect that Giotto dwelt in

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Florence, and carried on those great works that produced so enduring an influence on the whole character of European Art, at the very time when the contests between the Guelphs and Ghibellines occurred, that have since acquired so deep an interest from their influence on the fate of the great Dante, we cannot but regard him with peculiar feelings. He was the contemporary and friend of the great poet, both during the brief years of bright hopes and honours in his own beautiful Florence, and during that long period of exile that darkened the years of the great poet. To Giotto we owe the graceful and noble likeness of his friend, which seems, by its calm beauty, to give us an insight into his early history, attainable by no other means. We have already pointed out in the life of Dante,—in challenging the harsh judgment that some of the Poet's biographers have formed of him, without considering the influence of protracted adversity and cruel wrongs even on the noblest minds;—one source that still remains from whence to draw our own conclusions,—impartial, truthful, resting on the highest evidence, and within the reach of all,—that is the portrait of Dante, taken in his early and happy years, by his friend Giotto, the restorer of Italian Art. We have said that it is within the reach of all, for a slight but excellent copy of it is given in the interesting and popular work of Mrs. Jamieson, 'The early Italian Painters,' a copiously illustrated edition of which has recently been published. One likeness, peculiarly marked in character, is copied from an early Italian medal, and represents the great poet in his mature years, with his furrowed brow bound with the laurel—a wreath that, through his chequered life, was so often supplanted by the dark cypress. But better than this, is the calm, grave, yet stern expression of his features, which has been preserved, when death had set his seal on that noble brow, had stilled down all the fiery and vindictive passions of the wronged and

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long-enduring exile, and had dismissed him to the realization of those infinite mysteries of which he has bequeathed to us an all-imperfect yet wondrous vision. A copy of this cast, taken after death, at Ravenna, in 1321, is appended to his lyrical poems, translated by Charles Lyell, Esq. of St. Peter's College, Cambridge. The first likeness, taken when Dante was buoyant with hope and youth, and feeling within him the consciousness of powers capable of lofty achievements, exhibits a thoughtful, but most beautiful and loveable countenance; there is no trace of vindictiveness or spleen, but much in which we delight to trace the ardent imaginative enthusiast, whose boyish love survived all the vicissitudes of so chequered a life, and elevated the object of early fancy into his angelic guide to the glories of paradise. The latter likeness is the same face; the resemblance, indeed, is singularly striking; yet how great, how marvellous is the change between them! The one pregnant with all the bright visions of youth, bearing, without a sense of oppression, the weight of unborn, but mighty thoughts; the other sharpened into intensity with the endurance of long-protracted injury, suffering, and wrong, losing its sternness only in the rigid grasp of death.

Within a few years after the completion of the painting in the chapel of the Palazzo del Podesta, which includes the portraits of Dante, Brunetto Latini, Corso Donati, and others, the factions of the Neri and Bianchi took to arms in the city of Florence, the citizens were openly murdered in the streets, the rival partisans wreaked their vengeance on their opponents by every species of cruelty and wrong. Their houses were pillaged and set on fire; and among these the house of Dante was plundered. Dante, at the time on a mission to Rome, was condemned to be burned alive should he ever return to his native city; and thenceforth begun his long years of exile that ended only with his death. Among other manifestations

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of the mean enmity displayed by his opponents on their triumph, was the whitewashing of Giotto's picture in the chapel of the Palazzo del Podesta. The tradition of the existence of this series of portraits of so interesting a period has never been lost sight of, and while it has often been referred to as a source of unavailing regret, the hope of recovering them has frequently been expressed by more sanguine writers. The attempt was made more than once without success, until so recently as the year 1840, when the labours of S. Aubrey Bezzi were at length crowned with complete success, and the visitor to the native city of Dante can now inspect that remarkable portrait of him, which, until its recovery only seven years since, had been gazed on by no human eye since it disappeared beneath the daubing of the malignant Neri, during the vigorous manhood of the great Florentine.

Giotto was the contemporary and friend of Boccaccio and Petrarch, as well as of Dante. He was indeed worthy to be their associate and friend, as a great original thinker, whose works were to exercise as strong an influence as any of theirs on the future character of his people. We can hardly sufficiently appreciate this without bearing in remembrance the formal system of established symbolism of the Greek painters, which had been sanctioned and adopted by the church, and had received the admiration and worship of the people. To innovate on such a system required at once great courage and ability. But he proceeded with no timid hand. His earliest works manifest this bold spirit, that in such an age dared to think and act for itself, and to set aside all established formulas, and time-hallowed customs. We can hardly sufficiently value the influence of such a spirit, or conceive how much, in this respect, it may have indirectly helped to habituate the popular mind to that independent course of action which at a later period broke through the trammels of superstition, and ventured, in

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religion as well as in the Arts, to set aside the puerilities and corruptions which had been hallowed by time, and were guarded by bigotry and self-interest, and assumed the right of judging for itself.

Many curious traits of Giotto's character and habits have been transmitted to us by his contemporaries. He was of a happy and sociable disposition, and seems to have enjoyed the good-will of all the eminent men of his time, with many of whom he was on habits of intimate friendship. The following account of him by the humorous Italian novelist, Boccaccio, probably should be received as a specimen of the bantering style of converse in which he and Giotto were wont to engage in their gayer hours:—"Fair and dear Ladies," says the novelist, addressing his gentle readers, "It is a wondrous thing to see how oftentimes nature hath been pleased to hide within the most misshapen forms the most wondrous treasures of soul, which is evident in the persons of two of our fellow-citizens, of whom I shall now briefly discourse to you. Messer Forese de Rabatta, the advocate, being a personage of the most extraordinary wisdom, and learned in the law above all others, yet was in body mean and deformed, with, thereunto, a flat, currish *(ricagnato)* physiognomy; and Messer Giotto, who was not in face or person one whit better favoured than the said Messer Forese, had a genius of that excellence, that there was nothing which nature (who is the mother of all things) could bring forth, but he with his ready pencil would so wondrously imitate it, that it seemed not only *similar*, but *the same;* thus deluding the visual sense of men, so that they deemed that what was only pictured before them did in reality exist. And seeing that through Giotto that art was restored to light which had been for many centuries buried (through fault of those who, in painting, addressed themselves to please the eye of the vulgar, and not to content the understanding of the wise,) I esteem

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him worthy to be placed among those who have made famous and glorious this our city of Florence. Nevertheless, though so great a man in his art, he was but little in person, and, as I have said, ill-favoured enough. Now it happened that Messer Forese and Giotto had possessions in land in Mugello, which is on the road leading from Florence to Bologna, and thither they rode one day on their respective affairs, Messer Forese being mounted on a sorry hired jade, and the other in no better case. It was summer, and the rain came on suddenly and furiously, and they hastened to take shelter in the house of a peasant thereabouts who was known to them; but the storm still prevailing, they, considering that they must of necessity return to Florence the same day, borrowed from the peasant two old worn-out pilgrim-cloaks, and two rusty old hats, and so they set forth. They had not proceeded very far when they found themselves wet through with the rain, and all bespattered with the mud; but after a while, the weather clearing in some small degree, they took heart, and from being silent they began to discourse of various matters. Messer Forese having listened a while to Giotto, who was in truth a man most eloquent and lively in speech, could not help casting on him a glance as he rode alongside, and considering him from head to foot thus wet, ragged, and splashed all over, and thus mounted and accoutred, and not taking his own appearance into account, he laughed aloud. 'O Giotto,' said he, jeeringly, 'if a stranger were now to meet us, could he, looking on you, believe it possible that you were the greatest painter in the whole world?' 'Certainly,' quoth Giotto, with a side glance at his companion, 'certainly; if looking upon your worship he could believe it possible that you knew your A B C!' Whereupon Messer Forese could not but confess that he had been paid in his own coin."

Giotto appears to have possessed a shrewd wit, accom-

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panied by much vivacity and sociable kindliness of disposition. Many traditional allusions to his humorous repartees, some of them in the form of rhyme, and characterized by a lively poetic fancy, are preserved by the early Italian writers upon Art. To his happy good nature and his genial spirit, Giotto no doubt owed the general good-will which he seems to have experienced from all his contemporaries, almost totally unmixed with any of that spirit of envy which so frequently attends on great success, especially when its recipient has risen by his own genius from a humble origin. To all those sociable and endearing qualities the great painter appears to have added the no less useful qualities of shrewd worldly wisdom and thorough independence of character, and to these characteristics it was no doubt owing that he passed through life, surrounded by turbulent factions, constantly struggling for supremacy; and exercised his art at the Papal Court under the haughty pontiff, Boniface VIII.; and yet was able to preserve his friendship even with the exiled Dante, while Florence was waiting to welcome himself to the city, whose gates were for ever closed on the noble exile.

The likeness of Giotto has been handed down to posterity on the marble tomb erected by the noble Florentine, Lorenzo de' Medici, in the church of Santa Maria Novella, to commemorate the illustrious dead who reposes there beside the remains of his master, Cimabue. The countenance is remarkably characteristic of the man. Broad and massy features convey the idea of that hearty cheerfulness and humour which he manifested throughout his whole life, while a high and very full forehead amply confirms the idea we form from his works of his vigorous intellect and lively genius. If it is to be received as an accurate likeness of the great painter, it shows that we must regard the jesting description by Boccaccio as one of those humorous exaggerations in which such lively

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writers are wont to blend truth with the extravagance of caricature, retaining still sufficient of the real features to secure the recognition of the overdrawn portrait by others. Giotto's bust indeed exhibits none of the refinement and high breeding which we recognise at a glance in Simon Memmi's portrait of Cimabue; but we discover in it those features that confirm the remark—"Giotto's personal character and disposition had no small part in the revolution he effected. He seems to have had little reverence for received opinions about any thing, and was singularly free from the superstitious enthusiasm of the times in which he lived, although he lent his powers to embody that very superstition." In doing this, however, he in no way differed from the heathen poets who, while availing themselves of the machinery of the popular creed, converted it into an imagery for the embodyment of more refined and higher conceptions of spiritual things. It would be a false and unjust judgment to assume that because Giotto embodied the extravagant monkish legends of the middle ages in many of his pictures, he was rendering his art the willing slave of superstition. He used these as his great contemporary Dante did the same popular creed, to embody independent thoughts that none before them had the genius or daring to offer to the popular mind, and the fruit of them was manifested in some degree on their contemporaries, and far more on the following generation, in the independence of thought which challenged the superstitious dogmas that heretofore had received their blind reverence as among the most sacred mysteries of their religion.

It has been the fate of Giotto, like all those who have originated a new era in those arts that in any degree depend for their success on mechanical skill, to be surpassed in this latter respect even by far inferior followers. The painter in this respect stands at a vast disadvantage when compared with the poet. Dante's "Inferno" still

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stands alone in its terrible sublimity and power; while even the "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo is challenged for its conception, while it perishes with the vehicle in which it was embodied. Sufficient, however, still remains of the works of the great reviver of modern painting to enable us to judge of his power of thought, and to appreciate his genius. Mrs. Jamieson remarks on one small evidence of the value of his labours which has reached this country:—"A fragment of the old fresco, containing the heads of two of the Apostles, who are bending in grief and devotion over the body of St. John, is now in the collection of Mr. Rogers, the poet. It certainly justifies all that has been said of Giotto's power of expression, and, when compared with the remains of earlier Art, more than excuses the wonder and enthusiasm of his contemporaries."

To his contemporaries who had received the far inferior productions of Cimabue's pencil with such extravagant tokens of admiration and delight, his works seemed indeed, what they styled them, "Miracles of Art;" and great as have since been the triumphs of his successors, none have so far surpassed him as he excelled all who had preceded him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DUOMO OF FLORENCE.

THE examples of early genius which adorn the rise of painting in Italy towards the end of the thirteenth century, afford a very pleasing illustration of the ease with which those who are endowed with such extraordinary faculties can surmount every difficulty, and mould every circumstance to the working out their own noble aims. The history of the revival of sculpture in Italy is no less

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marked by these interesting characteristics, and some of its most instructive incidents belong to the associations of Florence,—the same honoured city where the dust of Cimabue and Giotto repose together, after having there given birth to a new era in the Arts. Our object is not to attempt a chronological history of painting and sculpture, but to select from among their earlier practisers some of the most instructive instances of the force of early genius, and of its triumph over the obstacles that impede ordinary minds, and compel them to abandon similar pursuits.

Most remarkable among the structures that adorn the capital of the grand duchy of Tuscany, is its Duomo, or Cathedral, which rears its marble dome and its graceful and lofty campanile on the northern bank of the Arno, forming in every respect the chief attraction to the traveller who visits the ancient city of Florence. This magnificent building was begun towards the close of the thirteenth century by Arnolfo di Lapo; Giotto succeeded to him, and under his care it was greatly advanced; in addition to the erection of its beautiful campanile, which has been already described; successive architects carried it on through different stages, until the celebrated Brunelleschi completed it in the fifteenth century, by raising the noble cupola which excited the admiration of Michael Angelo, and suggested to him the vast cupola which he projected for St. Peter's. The Cathedral of Florence stands in the middle of a great square or open place. On one side of it rises its lofty and graceful campanile or belfry to the height of 250 feet, of which the Emperor, Charles V., used to say, that it ought to be kept in a case, "like some precious jewel," and before it is the baptistry of St. John, an octagon chapel, enriched with Mosaics, sculptures, and bronzes of various periods, executed by some of the most eminent among the early Italian artists It is to this last feature of the Duomo of Florence that we

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would now particularly direct attention. Such chapels are common appendages to the Italian cathedrals, and are invariably dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the special patron, as it is conceived, of the sacred rite to which this chapel is set apart. About the commencement of the fourteenth century, Andrea da Pisa, a man of extensive and varied attainments, was invited to Florence. He was both a painter and a sculptor, though he excelled chiefly in the latter art; and his most famous work was the gates for the baptistry, which he executed in bronze, from designs by Giotto, representing the various events of the life of John the Baptist, and which still remain, a lasting evidence of his genius. Two other entrances to the baptistry still remained, the plain folding doors of which exhibited a striking contrast to Andrea's beautiful designs, and it was at length determined that these entrances should be furnished with gates of bronze no less worthy of the magnificent Cathedral than the first pair executed by the artist we have named. Dr. Memes remarks, in alluding to this, in the introduction to his life of Canova:—"There are epochs in the annals of the human mind, when its powers appear as if multiplied, or increased by the variety and the diversity of its exertions. Of these the fifteenth century presents a splendid instance. Advances in moral, intellectual, and political knowledge were then effected;—as also in the arts of utility and of elegance, which subsequent discoveries, however brilliant or useful, never can efface. In the history of sculpture, especially, the artists who then flourished will ever hold a distinguished rank. During this period, among the citizens of the Italian republics, two ruling passions may be discovered,—love of national independence, and admiration of the Arts. The almost continual wars carried on at this time, evince the ardour with which they maintained the one, while the dangers and difficulties of military operations did not prevent them from paying

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every attention to the cultivation of the other. The energies of a free people seem, indeed, to acquire fresh vigour from opposition to dangers which menace their liberty; and, amid such struggles, the most glorious efforts, both in Arts and in arms, have been displayed. The same jealousy of a superior, also, which animated the political world, appeared to pervade the empire of taste. There existed throughout this century an aristocracy of talent; and, as if genius had been the common birth-right of many, no single master so far excelled his contemporaries, as to impress upon the age the stamp and character of an individual mind. Of this general equality, the first occurrence in the history of sculpture furnishes a striking proof, at the same time assisting in the selection of those names, which, during this period, most directly influenced the progress of the art.

In the year 1400, the magistrates of Florence resolved to ornament the two remaining entrances to the baptistry with gates of bronze, similar in design to those which had before, by Andrea da Pisa, been prepared for the third: they accordingly invited a competition of the most celebrated artists, by publicly announcing their intention in every principality of Italy. Of the artists who, on the day appointed, assembled in great numbers, six were immediately acknowledged to surpass the rest in general estimation, though of doubtful superiority as compared with each other. Of the candidates thus selected, Brunelleschi and Ghiberti were Florentines; Jacomo della Quercia of Siena, Nicolo Lamberti of Arezzo, Francisco di Valdambrino, were Tuscans; and Simone dei Colli was from Lombardy. On the expiration of a year, during which they were maintained at the expense of the state, each was required to produce a complete pannel, finished in the proper style, and of the just dimensions, as required in the future work.

The time for examining these performances being

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arrived, a second assembly of artists was convened at Florence, when thirty-eight of the most accomplished were requested to act as judges. The competitors having wrought in secret, and apart from each other, the pannels were now first exposed, representing in mixed relief, the Sacrifice of Abraham, a subject prescribed, as well calculated to elicit their utmost skill, including both draped and naked figures, and animals. This was a spectacle worthy of the happiest ages of ancient Greece: the magistrates in their robes presided; the assembled citizens stood around; and the judges discussed aloud, in the presence of all, the respective merits of the rival productions. It is by such national and unbiassed patronage that the Arts are cherished. The countenance of individuals may foster a succession of artists, but, that Art may advance, its interests must become the care of the state. The most glorious meed of genius, which excites in rewarding, is the applause of a free and generous people.

After long deliberation, conducted with the most impartial scrutiny, Lorenzo Ghiberti, a youth of twenty-three years, was declared to have surpassed the skill and elegance of his opponents. The work thus honourably assigned to his superior merits, formed the constant labour of forty years of his life, and still remains one of the noblest monuments of modern Art."

Casts of this magnificent work of Art are now of frequent occurrence, affording a ready opportunity of estimating the progress that had then been made in Italy at that early period. A set of these casts may be seen in London, in the gallery of the Government School of Design at Somerset house; and another set have long been possessed by the Trustees for the encouragement of Scottish manufactures, in their extensive gallery of casts at the Royal Institution, Edinburgh. A beautiful border of fruits and flowers surrounds each pannel, resembling

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the elaborate carvings of Grinling Gibbons; the corners are filled with heads in alto relievo, beautifully executed, containing a variety of portraits of historical characters, chiefly heads of patriarchs, prophets, and sibyls. The pannels, which form the most prominent features of the design, contain a series of scripture subjects, abounding in the richest variety of expression and incident, illustrative of the Redemption of man, and of the principal events of Old Testament history.

These beautiful designs were rewarded with every mark of admiration and gratitude by the enthusiastic Florentines. Lorenzo Ghiberti was not only paid whatever he demanded, but received a grant of land in addition, and was elected by his fellow-citizens, Gonfaloniere, or chief magistrate of the State. He continued to be regarded with the same honourable admiration by his fellow-citizens till his death. This single work formed nearly the labour of a life-time, a matter the less surprising to us when we consider that it in reality comprehended many works, all of which manifest evidence of careful thought in their conception, and the minutest attention to detail in their execution. Ghiberti died in 1455, at the age of seventy-seven, and after his death his bust and that of his father, who had been his master, were placed in the Baptistry which was adorned with so noble a monument of his genius.

Such is the interesting history of one whose genius exercised a lasting influence on the Arts. Michael Angelo exclaimed, when he saw them, that they were fit to be the gates of Paradise, and there can be no question that these and the other noble works that adorn the Cathedral of Florence, wrought by the early artists of Italy, exercised a mighty influence in teaching their successors to climb to that greater perfection which the grace of Raphael, and the grandeur of Michael Angelo afterwards displayed. The many associations which cling around

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this gorgeous fane, are thus powerfully expressed in Rogers's beautiful description of Florence:—

"'Tis a gem
Of purest ray; and what a light broke forth,
When it emerged from darkness! Search within,
Without; all is enchantment! 'Tis the past
Contending with the present! and in turn
Each has the mastery.
In this chapel wrought
One of the few, nature's interpreters,
The few, whom genius gives as lights to shine,
MASSACCIO; and he slumbers underneath.
Wouldst thou behold his monument? Look round!
And know that where we stand, stood oft and long,
Oft till the day was gone, RAPHAEL himself,
He and his haughty RIVAL,—patiently,
Humbly, to learn of those who came before,
To steal a spark from their authentic fire,
Theirs who first broke the universal gloom,
Sons of the morning.—On that ancient seat,
The seat of stone that runs along the wall,
South of the church, east of the belfry-tower,
(Thou canst not miss it,) in the sultry time
Would DANTE sit conversing, and with those
Who little thought that in his hand he held
The balance, and assigned at his good pleasure
To each his place in the invisible world,
To some an upper region, some a lower;
Many a transgressor sent to his account,
Long ere in FLORENCE numbered with the dead."

CHAPTER VII.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MONS Vaticanus, a hill on the right hand of the Tiber, remained throughout the republic and the empire of ancient Rome, an unenclosed suburb; though Caligula constructed there a palace which was afterwards used by Nero, and acquired his name. To this spot ancient tra-

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dition pointed as the burial-place of the Apostle Peter, and the Emperor Constantine accordingly overthrew the circus of Nero, and built there a Basilica, or church, which he dedicated to that apostle. Such was the origin of the magnificent temple of St. Peter, which gradually increased in importance with the ambitious assumptions of the Bishops of Rome, and the ingenious legends they devised for proving their succession from him whom they styled the Prince of the Apostles, and the Lord of the Keys of Heaven. In the year 1146, Pope Eugenius III. began the erection of a papal residence on the Vatican hill, adjoining the Cathedral church, and successive popes added to the sacred palace. Gregory XI. fixed there his permanent residence on his return to Rome, and thenceforth all the powers of reviving Art were applied in enlarging and adorning the Palace of the Vatican.

Pope Sixtus V. built there the celebrated chapel which bears his name, and has been made by the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo one of the most memorable monuments of the progress of the Arts in modern Europe. These two great artists, whose names mark the epoch of highest excellence both in sculpture and painting since the revival of the Arts in the thirteenth century, afford a curious and interesting subject of study, not only from their pre-eminence in genius and the number and extent of their productions, but also from the very striking contrast exhibited both in the style of their works and in their personal characters.

Michael Angelo Buonarotti, the father, as he has been styled, of epic painting, is one of those mighty geniuses that appear at rare intervals, endowed seemingly with such vigorous mental faculties, that chance alone has determined the choice of their object, their capacity being alike applicable to achieve whatever they may attempt. He was the descendant of an ancient noble family of Italy, which had altogether fallen into decay

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ere his father succeeded to its barren honours. The elder Buonarotti had with difficulty obtained a humble legal office, which supplied him with bread, and his highest ambition was to see his son attain the rank of a notary or advocate in his native city. The young Michael Angelo, however, showed a taste for anything rather than the dull routine of a notary's duties, and escaped whenever he could, from the bondage of the desk, to watch the progress of some of the eminent painters who were then taking the lead in Italy, and especially Ghirlandaio, who was esteemed by many of his contemporaries as the greatest artist that Europe had produced. His introduction to that painter's study was the result of an acquaintance he had formed with Francesco Granacci, who was then one of his pupils, and gave advice and assistance to the young notary's clerk, and lent him designs to copy from his master's portfolio.

A curious account is given of Michael Angelo's first attempt at painting, with the assistance of Granacci. He obtained the loan of the young artist's colours and pencils, and procuring a print representing the legend of St. Anthony beaten by Devils, he copied it with such success as to obtain the commendation of many men of taste. His mode of proceeding in this juvenile effort is peculiarly characteristic of him, and shows the source of much of his future greatness. To go to nature for the models of beauty and the accurate representation of the human form, however often it may have been neglected by those who have devoted themselves to the Arts, seems so natural and reasonable a procedure, that it may justly excite our surprise to find it overlooked by any one who aimed at excellence; but Michael Angelo is the first whom we find going to nature for guidance even in those objects of which no exact models could be found. "He went to the fish-market to observe the form and colour of fins, and the eyes of fish; and whatever in nature

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constituted a part of his composition, he studied from its source. About this time he made a fac-simile of a picture, which is recorded to show his skill in imitation. A head had been given him to copy; and he imitated it so well, that, to try his success, he returned his own copy, instead of the original picture, to the person from whom it was borrowed, and the deceit was not immediately perceived; but having told one of his associates, who began to laugh, it was discovered. To add to the deception, he smoked his copy so as to make it appear of the same age as the original.

His father and his uncles perceiving the bias his mind had taken, often treated him harshly, conceiving that the Arts would degrade the dignity of the family, if followed as a profession. His inclination was paramount to their objections, and, although the displeasure it produced was a source of great uneasiness, yet he was so delighted in the pursuit that he irresistibly continued it. He copied the studies Granacci lent him from his master's portfolio with such success, that his partiality for that mode of spending his time daily increased, and his father at length perceiving it was hopeless to give his mind any other direction, resolved, by the advice of his friends, to place him under Domenico Ghirlandaio."

While pursuing his studies under Ghirlandaio, a school was established at Florence for the study of the antique, by the celebrated Lorenzo de' Medici, and Michael Angelo hastened, among others, to avail himself of the advantages which the beautiful collection of antique statues in the Medicean gardens offered. To this it is not improbable that he was stimulated in some degree by the jealousy of his master, who is said to have very early manifested his dissatisfaction at the success of a pupil who promised speedily to surpass his best efforts. The following is the account of his first proceedings in this new sphere. "No sooner had he entered upon his

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studies, than seeing a student modelling some figures in clay, he felt an emulation to do the same, and Lorenzo, who frequently visited the gardens, observing his progress, encouraged him with expressions of approbation. Not long afterwards, he was desirous to try his skill in marble, and being particularly interested with a mutilated old head, or rather a mask representing a laughing faun, he chose it for his original. At that time many persons were employed in the garden, making ornaments for a library which Lorenzo was decorating: from one of these workmen he begged a piece of marble sufficiently large for his purpose, and was accommodated with chisels and whatever else was necessary to execute his undertaking. Although this was his first essay in sculpture, he in a few days brought his task to a conclusion; with his own invention he supplied what was imperfect in the original, and made some other additions. Lorenzo visiting his garden as usual, found Michael Angelo polishing his mask, and thought it an extraordinary work for so young an artist; nevertheless he jestingly remarked, 'You have restored to the old faun all his teeth, but don't you know that a man of such an age has generally some wanting?' Upon this observation Michael Angelo was impatient for Lorenzo's absence, that, when alone, he might avail himself of his criticism; and immediately, on his retiring, he broke a tooth from the upper jaw, and drilled a hole in the gum to represent its having fallen out.

When Lorenzo made his next visit, he immediately saw the alteration, and was delighted with the aptness and simplicity of his scholar; he laughed exceedingly, and related the incident to his friends as an instance of docility and quickness of parts. From this circumstance he resolved to take him under his own immediate patronage, and desired the young artist to tell his father he wished to have some conversation with him.

Michael Angelo went home and delivered the message;

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his father immediately guessed why he was sent for, and it was with the greatest difficulty he could be prevailed upon to go. He lamented that Granacci had led his son astray to follow a profession that was dishonourable to the family, and declared he would never give his consent that he should be a stone-mason. Granacci endeavoured to explain to him the difference between that mechanical occupation and the profession of a sculptor; but the old man was little disposed to hear his reasoning, and less to be convinced; nevertheless, he felt it his duty to wait upon Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Lorenzo received him with his accustomed courtesy and politeness, and, after some previous conversation, asked him if he would resign his son to his care, and permit him to be adopted into his family; Lodovico consented with deference, and a due sense of the obligation. Lorenzo then offered his services to Lodovico himself, desiring to assist him, and inquired his profession; to which he replied, 'I have never followed any, but have always lived upon my slender income, taking care of some little possessions left to me by my ancestors, and have used my diligence not only to preserve, but improve them.' 'Well,' replied Lorenzo, 'look round in Florence, and if anything occurs favourable to your wishes, you may command me to the extent of my power.'

Michael Angelo was provided with a room, and every accommodation that could be desired, in the house, or rather the palace of Lorenzo. He sat at his table as his own son, and was introduced to men of rank and genius, where such men were every day received and welcomed. His leisure hours were passed in examining and contemplating, with Lorenzo himself, his extensive cabinet of gems and medals; but his more serious studies were pursued with diligence and ardour, and every day produced something to delight his patron."

In this respect some resemblance may be traced between

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the early history of Michael Angelo, and the incidents we have already referred to in the outset of Galileo. The father of each mourned over the wreck of their own little projects, and with blind obstinacy strove to confine the genius of their gifted sons within the petty limits of their ambition. A change, however, came over Florence on the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1492. The government passed into the hands of his weak and frivolous brother Petro, whose character is sufficiently illustrated by the nature of the patronage he extended to Michael Angelo. By him the young genius was employed, during the severe winter that succeeded his accession to power, in modelling a statue of snow! The durability of his own power was fitly prefigured in the work of art produced by his patronage. Within two years his frivolity and vice involved the downfall of his whole family, which was ignominiously expelled from the state which had been adorned by the learning and virtues of Cosmo and Lorenzo de' Medici.

Michael Angelo forsook Florence on the expulsion of the Medici, and retiring to Bologna, he executed several works of great merit, among which was his celebrated Sleeping Cupid. It was procured from him by a Florentine, and sent to Rome, where it was consigned to a person who had already received instructions as to the part he was to play. This man buried it in a vineyard, and afterwards contrived that it should be dug up in the presence of some who were ignorant of his proceedings. It was at once pronounced by all the connoisseurs who saw it to be a genuine antique, and the Cardinal S. Giorgio became its purchaser at a high price. The discovery of its real authorship led to the invitation of Michael Angelo to Rome, and although some of the connoisseurs were indignant at the trick that had been played on them, the most of them had the honesty and good sense to adhere to their originally expressed opinion as to its great merits.

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Michael Angelo produced several works of great merit during his first sojourn at Rome, but he was soon induced to return to Florence, where a more stable government had at length been secured, and great works were being projected by the state.

In the Piazza del Gran Duca of Florence, a gigantic statue of David still adorns the area in front of the Palazzo Vecchio. It was produced by Michael Angelo under very characteristic circumstances. A huge block of marble had lain for many years near the place, rudely blocked out by some earlier sculptor, with the view of making a colossal statue, but this preliminary operation had been executed with so little skill, that it was generally considered spoiled for any useful purpose. This discarded block, however, attracted the notice of the young sculptor. He begged permission of Pietro Soderini, the Gonfaloniere or Chief Magistrate, to be allowed to make a statue of it, and having obtained his sanction, he executed a model adapted to the irregularities of the misshapen marble, and completed in eighteen months the beautiful work of Art that still adorns the Ducal Piazza. Vasari relates an anecdote of Pietro Soderini, in reference to this statue, which might find many parallels in the history of criticism:—"The Gonfaloniere on seeing the statue admired it exceedingly, but pretended to discover that the nose was a little too large, which Michael Angelo explained, by attributing the appearance to the fore-shortening produced by the situation from which he saw it. His scientific reasoning, however, was not perfectly satisfactory; therefore, in an instant he mounted the scaffold, taking in one hand a chisel, and a little marble dust in the other, and pretended to reduce the surface, letting the dust fall as he appeared to be working. Soderini was flattered with this deference to his judgment, and soon exclaimed, *Now I am better pleased; you have given it life.*"

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But we must hasten on to the period of his return to Rome. He was only in his twenty-ninth year when he was invited thither by Julius II., a pontiff who, in his impetuosity and strikingly energetic character, bore a considerable resemblance to the great sculptor himself. He was summoned immediately to Rome, and commissioned to execute a mausoleum for the Pope on a scale of unusual magnificence. The whole proceedings that followed thereupon are singularly characteristic both of the Pope and the Sculptor. They are thus briefly described by a recent writer:—"Michael Angelo made a design which, had it been finished according to his original intention, would have surpassed in grandeur, beauty, and richness of ornament every ancient and imperial sepulchre. It was to have had four fronts of marble, embellished with forty statues, besides several mezzo-relievi in bronze. To this design Rome and the world are indebted for the magnificent church of St. Peter's; for Michael Angelo having suggested to the Pope that the interior of the old edifice would not allow sufficient space for the monument to be properly seen, the pontiff determined to rebuild the church on a larger scale. While the monument was in progress, the Pope delighted to come and inspect it; but the work was interrupted by an accident which strongly marks the character of the artist. Having occasion to make some communication to his holiness, and not having found admission on two applications, in the latter of which he felt himself somewhat superciliously treated by one of the officers in attendance, he gave directions to his servants to sell his goods to the Jews, and immediately set off for Florence. He had scarcely reached Poggiobonzi, before five couriers had arrived from Julius commanding his immediate return, but Michael Angelo was inflexible, and continued his journey. On arriving at Florence, he set about finishing the cartoon of Pisa, but three briefs were dispatched to Soderini the Gonfaloniere, requiring

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that he should be sent back. Michael Angelo excused himself, alleging that he had accepted a commission from the Grand Sultan to go to Constantinople for the purpose of building a bridge. The Pope in the meantime had gone on political affairs to Bologna, and Soderini, fearing he should himself incur the papal displeasure through Michael Angelo's contumacy, persuaded him to go to that city. Immediately on his arrival, and before he had had time to adjust himself, he was conducted by the Pope's officers before his holiness, who, looking at him with an angry glance, said, 'What, then! instead of coming to seek us, thou wast determined that we should come to seek thee?' Michael Angelo excused himself, saying, 'that he had quitted Rome, being unable, after his faithful services to his holiness, to endure the indignity of being denied admission to him.' A bishop in attendance, intending to say something in extenuation, observed to the Pope, that such persons, however expert in their professions, were usually ignorant of everything else: 'Who told thee to interfere?' exclaimed Julius, bestowing at the same time a hearty blow with his staff on the shoulders of the ecclesiastic; and commanding Michael Angelo to kneel, he gave him his benediction, and received him into full favour, giving him directions at the same time to make his statue in bronze. Michael Angelo soon completed the clay model; the statue was the personification of majesty, but the face had so terrible an expression, that the Pope demanded, 'Am I uttering a blessing or a curse?' Michael Angelo replied, 'that he had intended to represent him admonishing the people of Bologna, and inquired if his holiness would have a book placed in one of the hands:' 'Give me a sword,' answered the warlike pontiff, 'I know nothing of books.'"

Michael Angelo returned to Rome, but the Pope had meanwhile determined on delaying the execution of his own monument, in order to dedicate, for a time, the

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genius of the great artist to honour the memory of his uncle, Sixtus IV. Raphael was at this time painting in the Vatican, and exciting universal admiration by his magnificent productions, and it has been affirmed, not without some appearance of reason, that this commission was given to Michael Angelo with the hope of damaging his reputation in the opinion of the sovereign pontiff. He was known never to have painted a single figure in fresco, and his jealous rivals confidently looked forward to an ignominious failure should he undertake the commission, or a rupture with Julius if he declined. There is no doubt that he undertook the work with extreme reluctance; but, as Soderini told him, he had already acted by the Pope as the king of France dared not have done, and he now submitted to his commands. Whatever secret causes may have instigated this new arrangement, there can be no doubt that it was mainly promoted by the Pope from his admiration of the genius of Michael Angelo, and his thorough confidence in his abilities for the novel task he assigned him. There is far greater appearance of probability in the honourable motives assigned by Roscoe for this proceeding. "Soon after the return of Michael Angelo from Bologna to Rome, the Pope, who was well aware of the variety and extent of his talents, formed the resolution of decorating the chapel erected by his uncle, Sixtus IV., with a series of paintings on sacred subjects, in a style of grandeur superior to any that had before been produced. The execution of this immense work he committed to Michael Angelo, who, we are told, felt great reluctance in undertaking it, being desirous to proceed with the tomb of the pontiff, and endeavoured to prevail upon the Pope rather to intrust it to Raffaello, who was much more conversant than himself with the process of painting in fresco. It has also been said, that the Pope was prompted to engage Michael Angelo in this employ by the envy or malignity of the enemies of that

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artist, and particularly of Bramante, who, being well aware of the superiority of Michael Angelo as a sculptor, conceived that as a painter he would be found inferior to Raffaello; but imputations of this kind are generally the result of little minds, that attribute to more elevated characters the motives by which they are themselves actuated, and the instances of mutual admiration and good-will which appear in the conduct of Raffaello and Michael Angelo towards each other are, at least, a sufficient proof that they were both equally superior to an illiberal jealousy. The pontiff, who had destined the talents of Raffaello to another purpose, would, however, admit of no apology."

The Sistine Chapel was built by Sixtus IV., and decorated, according to the ability of the age, with historical paintings by various masters. These included paintings by Signorelli, Perugino, Domenico Ghirlandaio, and others, so that it would be an extravagant and ridiculous idea to imagine that such works of Art were doomed to destruction by the nephew of Pope Sixtus from any other motive than the expectation that they could be replaced by far nobler works of Art.

Michael Angelo proceeded rapidly with his cartoons, as the designs for fresco painting are termed, from their being drawn on large sheets of paper; but as he had never painted in fresco, when they were finished, he sent to Florence for such assistance as he could procure capable of transferring them with fidelity to the walls. He very soon saw enough of their work, however, to satisfy him that some other method must be adopted in order to realize his conceptions. He accordingly took the brush and colours into his own hands, and with no other knowledge of the art than he had acquired from seeing others execute it, he commenced the magnificent series of paintings which still stand foremost among the wondrous creations of Art. Vasari tells us that without giving his

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assistants any previous notice, he locked himself in the chapel, destroyed all that they had done, and set to work as a fresco painter, without suffering any one either to assist or trouble him. He did not all at once arrive at a perfect command of his materials, as may readily be conceived. The subject of the Deluge was his choice for his first attempt, and this he accordingly executed on the ceiling, but to his horror it was no sooner finished, than it became completely obscured by an exudation from the wall. This greatly disconcerted Michael Angelo. He went to the Pope, told him of it, and begged leave to be allowed to leave the adorning of the Sistine Chapel to some more practised hand. Julius, however, was not so easily turned aside from his schemes. San Gallo, a skilful architect, and a man of universal intelligence, was employed to examine into the source of this unexpected impediment. He reported that the whole cause of it was the use of too new plaster, and this obstacle being readily overcome, no further difficulties occurred to stay the progress of his frescos.

His proceedings were watched by the pontiff with the liveliest interest. "As the work advanced," says Duppa, "the Pope frequently visited him in the chapel, and ascended the ladder to the top of the scaffolding, where Michael Angelo lent him his hand that he might get with safety on the platform. Notwithstanding this daily opportunity of indulging an eager curiosity, his holiness grew impatient to see the general effect, as far as it was advanced; and, to pacify the natural impetuosity of his temper, all the machinery was removed before half the ceiling was completed. To gratify the curiosity of a patron in a premature exhibition is often a hazardous experiment, but fortunately this was attended with no disappointment. The Pope was perfectly satisfied, and all men of taste and virtù so eagerly pressed forward to avail themselves of the opportunity, that they crowded into

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the chapel before the dust occasioned by the taking down of the scaffolding had subsided.

After the curiosity of Rome was satisfied, he resumed his work, and with the most persevering assiduity continued till it was finished. The ceiling, which is coved, he ornamented with architectural decorations painted in chiar'-oscuro, and separated into numerous divisions. The flat space at the top he divided into nine compartments, each containing a subject from the Old Testament, in the following order:—

The Deity dividing the light from the darkness, may be considered as the first in the local arrangement; the second picture represents a personification of the Deity, with extended arms; creating the sun and moon, and in the same compartment creating and fructifying the earth; in the third space the Deity is supposed to be looking down upon the waters, commanding them to be a habitable deep; the fourth is the creation of Adam, in which the omnipotent Power is surrounded by angels, extending his right arm as if imparting the vital principle to the created form; the fifth is the creation of Eve; the sixth, the loss of Paradise; the seventh, the sacrifice by Cain and Abel; the eighth, the Deluge; and the ninth represents the inebriation and exposure of Noah. Beneath the chiar'-oscuro entablature, which divides the coved from the flat part of the ceiling, are arranged forty-eight infantine figures, standing two and two on pedestals, in diversified attitudes, supporting the cornice as caryatides; and between them are seated twelve colossal figures of prophets and sybils, alternately arranged. Over the windows, in compartments called lunettes, are fourteen compositions, and an equal number of tablets, inscribed with names expressing the genealogy of Christ; and in triangular spaces, produced by the thickness of the wall immediately over the lunettes, are introduced eight compositions of domestic subjects. In the angles at the four

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extreme corners of the ceiling are represented the miracle of the brazen serpent, the execution of Haman, the death of Goliah, and the treachery of Judith. Besides these various compositions, are ten medallions with historical subjects, and more than fifty single figures disposed as ornamental accompaniments to the general design."

The introduction of the sibyls, who were the virgin prophetesses of heathen antiquity, is the result of the singular prophecies ascribed to them by some of the early fathers in reference to the coming of Christ. "That a mighty prophet should be born of a virgin, and be the salvation of the Gentiles," was affirmed by Augustine and others, to have been foretold in various forms by these rapt seers. They accordingly received from the schoolmen a rank alongside of the prophets and apostles of the Bible, and hence they were introduced by Michael Angelo on the roof of the Sistine Chapel, ranged alternately with the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament. "From the commencement to the conclusion of this stupendous monument of human genius, twenty months were only employed. So short a time for the completion of so vast a work could hardly be credited, if it were not more difficult to refuse the testimony on which it is supported, than to doubt the fact. Nevertheless, the Pope harassed its progress with impatience; for he was an old man, and as his designs, of whatever nature they might be, were always planned with the enthusiasm of youth, so they were hastened with a consciousness of his having no time to lose. To comply, therefore, with the eager desire of his patron, Michael Angelo removed the scaffolding before he had put the last finish to his work; and on All Saints' day, in the year 1512, the chapel was opened; and the Pope officiated at high mass to a crowded and admiring audience.

After this solemnity, and the public curiosity was gratified, the Pope willingly consented that the pictures should

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be retouched where he wished to improve them; but on considering the inconvenience of re-erecting the scaffolding, he declined doing anything more, and said that what was wanting was not of material importance; the Pope observed, they ought to be ornamented with gold, to give a characteristic splendour to the chapel; to which Michael Angelo replied, 'In those days gold was not worn, and the characters I have painted were neither rich nor desirous of wealth, but holy men, with whom gold was an object of contempt.' The repartee was happy, and with respect to his own works, he felt the importance of a truth best known in an age of simplicity, that the mind, and not the material, is the true basis of future fame.

The ceiling being finished, he applied himself to make designs and studies for other pictures for the sides of the chapel, to complete the original plan; but on the 21st of February, 1513, the Pope died, and to Michael Angelo his loss was not supplied."

CHAPTER VIII.

POPE JULIUS II.

PERHAPS no two men ever met together under similar circumstances possessed with the like energy and strange fire of genius as Julius II. and Michael Angelo. There never was a man less adapted, by his natural disposition and the course of his previous life, for selection as the ruler of a Church that called itself Christian, than Pope Julius II. Yet on that very account we regard him with sorrowful admiration. He was a man of gigantic intellect and fearless impetuosity in the pursuit of the objects that appeared to him worthy of attainment. As a temporal sovereign he would probably have stood foremost

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amongst the list of great heroes that the world has long regarded with blind admiration, for with all the courage of an Alexander or a Gustavus, he had the intellect of a Cæsar or a Cromwell. The testimony which Francis I. bore to his merits, while defending himself before Leo X. for having appeared in arms against the Holy See, amply illustrates his qualities. "In our time," said he, "there was not a more terrible enemy in war than he; who, indeed, was a most expert captain, and was more fitted to be the leader of an army than the head of the Roman Church." It is indeed a strange illustration of the perverse assumptions of infallibility by the Church of Rome, that such a man should have been selected for her chief bishop. An Italian Roman Catholic writer says of him, "He had courage enough to have ranked with the bravest, and views sufficiently comprehensive for the loftiest ambition; but the milder virtues, subject to moderation, he either found inadequate to his purpose, or did not feel their worth." As a temporal sovereign he would have most probably proved a severe despot, whose wise sway would have compensated in its general results for the individual suffering it involved. He might well order Michael Angelo to put a sword in his hand instead of a book. He had been a man of war from his youth, and trained up solely in its school. Muratori relates that at the siege of Mirandola, in 1511, he marched at the head of his troops, and fearlessly exposed himself to the fire of the enemy while planning the mode of assault. He was foremost in every important situation of danger that gave promise of success, and before the town could formally capitulate he mounted the scaling ladder, and entered it sword in hand through the breach he had made.

The meeting of two such fiery geniuses as Julius and Michael Angelo was like the contact of flint and steel. We feel as though we owe nearly as much to the patron

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as to the artist for the great works the latter produced. Scarcely any other than the impetuous and despotic pontiff could have compelled the Florentine sculptor to lay aside his chisel for the brush, and produce those great works in fresco which yet remain in the chapel of Sixtus IV., although obscured by the slow touch of time, and the more injurious smoke of wax tapers, which the showy ceremonial adapted to the services of the Roman Catholic Church has required perpetually on its altars for above three hundred years. To Julius we undoubtedly owe the grand realizations of some of the most sublime subjects of sacred history that adorn the compartments of its ceiling; and the mysterious decorations of its walls, where sit in solemn grandeur those sublime and awful figures of the sibyls and prophets, that unfold to the imagination a terrible magnificence of form, which seems fitted to be the vehicle of divine inspiration, and of the dread revelations of judgment and woe wherewith the ancient prophetic scroll was filled.

Julius II. seems to have been constantly urged on by that idea of the briefness of time compared with the vast ambitions of the aspiring mind, which occasionally has possessed men of impetuous energy of disposition, as with a fire, burning ever onward with resistless fury. It is a sense of the value of time that is very slightly influenced by any consideration of that which succeeds it, but rather the appreciation of the daring fatalist who values time as a treasure for present enjoyment, and which is rapidly being spent, use it as he will.

When the scaffolding was removed from the Sistine Chapel in 1511, in order to gratify the general desire for a view of the first portion of its grand adornments, the universal admiration they excited seemed to give new force to the impatient longings of the Pope for their completion, and several curious and strange scenes followed between the irascible pontiff and the scarcely less

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impatient artist. "The applauses bestowed on them," says Roscoe, "induced the pontiff to urge Michael Angelo to proceed in the work, regardless of the advice of Bramante, who, as we are told, was now desirous that the termination of it should be intrusted to Raffaello. As the work approached its termination, the eagerness and importunity of the pontiff increased. Having impatiently inquired from the artist when he meant to finish it, and Michael Angelo having replied, 'When I am able;' 'When I am able!' retorted Julius, in great wrath, 'thou hast a mind, then, that I should have thee thrown from the scaffold!' After this threat the completion of the work was not long delayed; and on the day of All Saints, in the year 1512, the paintings were exposed to public view."

No less do we owe to Julius the great works of Michael Angelo's chisel than of his pencil. It was for the unfinished mausoleum of Julius II. that some of his noblest colossal statues were executed. The Pope gave him an unlimited commission. When he named its probable cost his answer was, "It may be twice that sum if needs be;" and Michael Angelo felt the subject as intrusted to him on such terms to be in every way worthy of his genius. We have already recorded the first interruption of this gigantic undertaking. "Having obtained the approbation of the pontiff to the design of his monument, Michael Angelo engaged in the execution of this immense work with all the ardour which was natural to him, and with all the expedition of which so laborious a performance would admit. The colossal figure of Moses, which yet occupies the centre of this astonishing piece of Art, was soon completed; and several other statues, destined to fill their proper stations in the monument, were either finished or in a state of great forwardness. The tardy realization of the original design was however, ill calculated to correspond with the impatient

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temper and rapid ideas of the pontiff, who expected by striking the ground with his foot to obtain the accomplishment of his wishes. As the labour continued and the expense increased, the pontiff became dissatisfied, and at length appeared indifferent to the completion of the work. The demands of Michael Angelo, for the charge of conveying the marble from the quarries of Carrara to Rome, were treated with neglect, and when he requested an interview, Julius refused to admit him into his presence. The artist did not long deliberate on the course of conduct which it became him to adopt. He requested the attendants of the Pope to inform his Holiness, that whenever he chose to inquire for him he might seek him elsewhere, and immediately taking his departure from Rome, he hastened to Poggibonzi, within the territories of Florence."

The great work thus interrupted, though afterwards frequently resumed, and with honest and enthusiastic zeal on the part of the artist, after the death of his patron, was never completed, and its magnificent fragments are now scattered over Europe. The figure of the great Jewish lawgiver, which was originally destined for a niche in one of the four façades of the tomb, represents him as seated in an attitude of awful majesty, at the moment when descending from the mount, and with his face resplendent with the reflected glory of the Divine presence, he beholds the idolatrous Israelites worship the golden calf. It now forms the chief feature in the smaller monument which was completed for Julius under the more stinted encouragement of his executors.

The Moses was executed by Michael Angelo under the enthusiasm which the ample commission of the Pope had inspired, and is an astonishing production of genius; commanding all the more admiration and interest from its differing so totally in every respect from the great works of the Greek sculptors, that it almost seems a different art. The enthusiasm of the sculptor is happily illustrated by

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an incident which is related of him on its completion. Gazing on it for some moments with the sense of high gratification that would naturally accompany the successful realization of his magnificent idea, he is said to have struck it on the thigh, half sportively, with his chisel, and to have exclaimed, "*Parla dunque, tu sai!*"—"speak now, thou can'st!"

Dr. Memes thus refers to this great work of art in the introduction to his Life of Canova:—"Amid the creations of genius, the Moses of Michael Angelo rises a solitary and matchless monument. Without model among the works of ancient masters, it has remained inimitable and unimitated by modern artists. The original conception of an extraordinary mind, it would be equally vain to expect its prototype in nature. Thus isolated by its own peculiar sublimity of character, this statue presents a striking resemblance to the imagination from which it derived existence, exhibiting a faithful transcript of the mental beauties and blemishes of its author. The prophet, seated on the fragment of a rock, his right arm resting on the tablet of the law, is represented at the moment when descending from the mount, the first distant prospect of the idolatrous camp has opened on his view; but his, though the posture, is not the state of repose. A restless and impatient action, perturbation and solicitude, pervade the whole figure; while a character of intellectual and stern grandeur, of moral fierceness, of haughty and unrelenting independence, breathes—lives in the marble, and almost overpowers the senses. The eye traversing vacancy, and bent on distance, seems to imply that the objects of resentment are still remote; yet the expression has annihilated both time and space, the ardour of feeling has instantly transferred him to the tents of his recreant countrymen! Who shall dare to abide that storm of indignation, of scorn, of wrath, which darkens in the frown, which is bursting from the lips.

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and lightning in the eyes? 'Now condemn,' the spectator is ready to exclaim, 'for malediction hangs upon thy tongue, and thou canst speak!'"

The Moses is thus celebrated in the beautiful but too daring verses of Zoppi, an Italian poet, who in his admiration of the great work of art, seems almost profane in the bold contrast he draws between it and Israel's molten calf:—

"What sculptured form, still through revolving time,
Rises supreme amid the works of art,—
Whose lips do all but living sounds impart?
'Tis Israel's prophet—mark the air sublime,
The double ray—the soul unstained by crime:
'Tis he! descending from the mountain lone,
When o'er his face a light celestial shone;
Thus awful seemed he in the watery clime,
While hung suspended the recoiling wave;
Thus looked, when following as they trode,
On Egypt's sons the ocean whelmed a grave;
If such an image—not the molten god,
Apostate Israel! ye had bent before,
The crime had then seemed venial to adore!"

The resplendent glory of Moses's countenance, which the Israelites besought him to veil, is strangely represented in the marble figure by two short horns issuing from his forehead like those of a bull. This is in accordance with the reading of the Latin translation of the Bible, termed the Vulgate, then chiefly in use among those who consulted that sealed book; and however strange and incongruous such adjuncts to the Hebrew prophet may appear when described, they appear in no way out of character in that majestic form, when seen amid the clustering locks and flowing beard that clothe the speaking countenance, about to denounce wrath and judgment on rebellious Israel.

The succeeding pontificate of Leo X., the celebrated patron of Raphael, and the eulogized friend of learning

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and the Arts, is nearly a blank in the history of the great artist. Michael Angelo was employed by the Pope on the façade of the Church of St. Lorenzo at Florence, which had been left unfinished by his grandfather, Cosmo de' Medici, but the sole fruits of this commission was his spending nearly the whole period of Leo's pontificate in the marble quarries of the mountains of Pietra Santa, in the Florentine State, superintending the construction of roads and the rude labours of the quarry, instead of carrying on the grand projects he had designed. The blame of this has been attempted to be thrown upon the artist, in consequence of a very characteristic incident that occurred during the preliminary steps. The artist had applied to the envoy of the Pope for a sum of money necessary for the carrying on of the work he had set him to superintend, and not receiving any attention to his demands, he proceeded to Carrara, where he was followed after a time by a messenger of the Pope, with the necessary funds. These, however, the messenger refused to give up without an acknowledgment of its receipt, and, as Michael Angelo was in that case the mere agent of the Pope for paying away the money to others, he refused, telling the messenger that the money was on account of the Pope, and not on his own, and that if he did not choose to leave the money without a receipt he might take it back, for he never gave receipts or acquittances for other people.

The Pope is said to have been highly indignant at the treatment of his messenger, but Michael Angelo was little moved even by the anger of popes; and on the death of that luxurious pontiff the quarries that had wasted his time were deserted, and the façade of St. Lorenzo entirely laid aside; while Michael Angelo again resumed his labours for the mausoleum of his fiery and impetuous, but more worthy patron, Julius.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

Leo X. was succeeded in the papal throne by Adrian VI., the nature of whose artistic patronage was manifested by his compliance with the mean desires of Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, nephew to Julius II., who demanded that Michael Angelo should account for sixteen thousand crowns which he affirmed had been paid during the pontificate of his uncle. Michael Angelo sent word that he would make out his account and forward it to Rome, but this failed to satisfy the Duke, and the Pope was induced to issue his mandate, summoning him to appear personally at Rome. Fortunately the government of Florence was at that time held by the Cardinal Giuliano de' Medici, a cousin of Leo X., who better appreciated the worth of the great artist than he had done. Giuliano interfered, and refused to permit his removal to Rome, but offered his personal guarantee for a just accommodation of the dispute.

Michael Angelo was now employed by him to build a library, and a new sacristy to the Church of St. Lorenzo, which was designed as a mausoleum for the Medici family; and there still stands the wondrous monument which he erected to the memory of the Duke Lorenzo, but which is far more a monument of the great genius that designed and completed it. The vigorous verse of the author of "Italy" best describes the impression which a sight of these sepulchral monuments produces on the thoughtful gazer:—

> "Nor then forget that chamber of the dead,
> Where the gigantic shapes of Night and Day,
> Turned into stone, rest everlastingly;
> Yet still are breathing, and shed round at noon
> A two-fold influence,—only to be felt—

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A light, a darkness, mingling each with each;
Both and yet neither. There, from age to age,
Two ghosts are sitting on their sepulchres.
That is the Duke Lorenzo. Mark him well.
He meditates, his head upon his hand.
What from beneath his helm-like bonnet scowls?
Is it a face, or but an eyeless skull?
'Tis lost in shade; yet, like the basilisk,
It fascinates and is intolerable.
His mien is noble, most majestical!
Then most so, when the ritual choir is heard
At morn or eve,—nor fail thou to attend
On that thrice-hallowed day, when all are there;
When all, propitiating with solemn songs,
Visit the dead. Then wilt thou feel his power!"

At the close of the brief pontificate of Adrian, whose austere virtues had made him detested by the luxurious Romans, Giuliano de' Medici succeeded to the papal throne under the title of Clement VII., and soon after Michael Angelo followed him to Rome. His pontificate presents no such pleasing fruits as we might anticipate from his patronage of Michael Angelo. By indiscretion and duplicity he lost the esteem of his friends and the respect of his enemies; and the republic of Florence, which he had hoped to render an hereditary government in the hands of the Medici family, was involved in irretrievable ruin. We now find the strange diversity of Michael Angelo's genius brought to bear on altogether different objects than any that had hitherto occupied his great mind. The Pope was literally purchasing the liberties of the Republic from the Emperor, Charles V., and the attempts to avert it involved both friend and foe in misunderstanding and ruin. "The Gonfaloniere Capponi," says the biographer of Michael Angelo, "entered into a private correspondence with the Pope to palliate an evil which it was not difficult to anticipate, yet without relaxing any measures that ultimate necessity might require. The city was ordered to be completely fortified, and in every respect to be put in the best state of resistance and

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defence, and Michael Angelo was appointed military architect and master of the ordnance. The correspondence between the Gonfaloniere and Clement VII. was soon discovered by his enemies; and in the enthusiasm of democracy, and the jealousy inseparable from the republican form of government, he was immediately accused of treachery. The citizens rose in arms, seized upon the government palace, convened the magistrates, and put Capponi under an arrest. He was afterwards tried according to law, and honourably acquitted; but was, nevertheless, succeeded in his office by one Francesco Carduci, who neither for virtue nor ability was worthy of so great an honour or so important a trust.

At this time the city of Ferrara was considered to be the best fortified town in Italy, and the Duke Alfonso to be eminently distinguished for his abilities in that branch of knowledge. Michael Angelo was therefore advised to make him a visit previous to his commencing the fortification of Florence, in order to avail himself of his experience. He approved of the measure, and embraced the opportunity. When he arrived at Ferrara, the Duke received him with the utmost courtesy, and, without hesitation, showed him every part of the works, and made every communication without reserve: he showed him also his private collection of virtù; and when Michael Angelo was about to take his leave, he facetiously said, 'You are now my prisoner, and if you wish to have your liberty, you must make me a promise to let me have something of your own hand, either in sculpture or painting.' To this flattering request he willingly complied; and on his return, notwithstanding his time was much taken up in the fortification of the city, he began a picture of Jupiter and Leda, including the birth of Castor and Pollux, which was afterwards finished, but from a misunderstanding between him and the Duke's agent, it

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was not sent to Ferrara, but went into France, where it was purchased by Francis I."

Meanwhile the Florentines were assailed on every hand by their enemies, and it became the policy of the government, when they found the danger could not be averted, to seek by negotiations and propositions of compromise, addressed both to the emperor and the Pope, to retard the enemy in their advances on the city until it could be put into a complete state of defence, and in this they succeeded according to their desire;—the fortifications constructed under the directions of Michael Angelo being at length adjudged sufficient to resist the assaults of the enemy.

Florence fell: the ungrateful assailant of its liberties, Clement VII., died, and Michael Angelo again became involved with a new Pope, whose commands were opposed to the fulfilment of previous engagements, and especially to his long-cherished desire of completing the monument of Julius II.

The Last Judgment, the vast painting executed by Michael Angelo for the altar-piece of the Sistine Chapel, was now begun under the auspices of the new pontiff, Paul III. A singular letter, which has been preserved, written by the painter to his friend Pietro Aretino, at the time he was preparing the cartoon for this vast picture, contains the following curious passage:—"Your letter has given me both pleasure and pain at the same time; it gave me pleasure, because it came from you, whom I esteem unique in virtù; and pain, that I had finished the greater part of my composition, and could not adopt your ideas of the Day of Judgment, which are so well conceived, that had the event taken place, and yourself been present, you could not have described it better."

This great work of genius was finished in the year 1541, and the chapel opened for the high festival of the church on Christmas day, and was gazed on with awe and won-

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der by the crowds who flocked to behold it, including the most distinguished for learning and rank at the papal court. The means by which he has attempted to realize an idea of this stupendous event is thus briefly described: "The composition, in its general design, is conformable to the doctrines and tenets of the Christian faith. Angels are represented as sounding trumpets, the dead as rising from the grave, and ascending to be judged by their Redeemer, who, accompanied by the Virgin Mary, stands surrounded by martyred saints. On his right and left are groups of both sexes, who, having passed their trial, are supposed to be admitted into eternal happiness. On the opposite side to the resurrection and ascension, are the condemned precipitated down to the regions of torment; and at the bottom is a fiend in a boat conducting them to the confines of perdition, where other fiends are ready to receive them. In two compartments at the top of the picture, made by the form of the vaulted ceiling, are groups of figures bearing the different insignia of the Passion."

The following criticism on it by our great countryman, Flaxman, will better convey an idea of its peculiar characteristics:—"In the great compositions of modern times, the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo, and the Fall of the Angels by Rubens, there are multitudes, legions in comparison with the separate figures and single groups in the most considerable of the ancient works. The beholder is thunderstruck by angels falling in groups and forked masses, amalgamating in the vivid flashes, and darkening in the sulphurous smoke, in the various dismay, horror, and torpor, of the deadened intellect in their lost condition. In this picture, the undulation of figures and groups, the entwining of limbs, the breadth and quantities of light and shade, may be studied by the painter and sculptor with equal advantage.

The Last Judgment by Michael Angelo is, however, a

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more consummate work, and the parent from which Rubens's Fall of the Angels has derived its being. If the Judgment is inferior to the Falling Angels in general effect—in the breadth of light and shade—the strength of approaching parts—and the gradual distance of those which retreat, by diffusion of middle tint and the vivid variegations of reflex, it is superior in the sublimity and extent of character and action—in the gradations of sentiment and passion, from exalted beatitude to the abyss of hopeless destruction—in the kinds and species of these degrees,—in relations to the theological and cardinal virtues, opposed to the seven deadly sins—in uncommon, original, distinct, and fit appropriation in the groups or separate figures. The sentiment of particular figures and groups is in the whole, and all the parts, penetrating, sympathetic, and true.

Despair plunges headlong downwards; the fall of the contentious is aided by strife and blows; the malignant, drawn downwards by the fiends, is tormented in his way by the biting serpent; for some there is a terrific contest between angels and infernals.

Among the happy, brotherly love is evident in three figures which shoot upwards together, whose faces, seen a little beyond each other, appear to be reflections of the same self: several rise to the heavenly region by the attractions of purity, piety, and charity.

In this stupendous work, in addition to the genius of the mighty master, the mechanical powers and movements of the figure, its anatomical energies and forms, are shown by such perspective of the most difficult positions, as surpass any examples left by the ancients on a flat surface or in low relief, and are only to be equalled in kind, but not in the proportion of complication, in the front and diagonal views of the Laocoon, and all the views of the Boxers, which are both entire groups."

Again, we find the resources of Michael Angelo's

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gigantic genius taxed for novel undertakings by his new pontifical patron, who, like Julius II., had such confidence in his powers of mind, that he refused even to permit him the exercise of reasonable discretion in selecting the species of employment for which he conceived he was best suited by taste and habits of study. In the year 1546, San Gallo, the architect, died, and Michael Angelo was selected by the Pope to fill the vacant situation as architect of St. Peter's. The proceedings consequent thereon are equally singular and characteristic with those that have already engaged our attention in considering his intercourse with previous Popes. "He had at first," says Duppa, "declined that honour, but his holiness laid his commands upon him, which admitted neither of apology nor excuse, and he accepted the appointment upon these conditions, that he would receive no salary, and that it should be so expressed in the patent, since he undertook the office purely from devotional feelings; and that as hitherto the various persons employed in all the subordinate situations had only considered their own interest, to the extreme prejudice of the undertaking, he should be empowered to discharge them, and appoint others in their stead; and lastly, that he should be permitted to make whatever alteration he chose in San Gallo's design, or entirely supply its place with what he might consider more simple, or in a better style. To these conditions his holiness acceded, and the patent was made out accordingly."

Michael Angelo entirely laid aside the plans of his predecessors, and executed a new model, the design of which met with the complete approbation of the Pope. This was in some degree rendered necessary by the exhausted state of the papal treasury on the death of Clement VII., and the failure of important sources of revenue owing to the Reformation of Germany, and the disaffection of Henry VIII. in England. Michael Angelo, while rejecting altoge-

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ther the plans of his immediate predecessors, which appear to have been at once costly and meretricious, expressed a high opinion of Bramante's original plan, and was probably solely prevented from carrying it out in its general features by the reduced funds applicable to the object, Paul III. having concurred with him in seeking to begin anew on a plan that should afford a reasonable hope of completion. It is to be regretted that the state of the building involved the expenditure of much of the great artist's time and skill in merely undoing the work of his predecessors. Notwithstanding many impediments, however, some of which resulted from the enmity of disappointed rivals, the magnificent fabric advanced with considerable rapidity. The Pope had the most perfect confidence in his genius and good faith, and seconded all his desires to the extent of his ability. Paul III., however, somewhat resembled his old patron Julius, in the extent of his demands. He seemed to consider it impossible to overtask the resources of his great mind, although he was now advanced in years, and might have reasonably sought for repose after a life of such unvarying exertion both of body and mind. He was commissioned to carry on the Farnese palace; to build a palace on the Capitoline Hill; to construct galleries for a collection of antique sculptures and other relics of ancient Art; and to rebuild a bridge over the Tiber, where the Pons Palatinus anciently stood; and yet with the vast designs of painting and architecture which were accomplished by him during this pontificate, he did not allow his chisel to rest, but completed two colossal statues for the long-projected monument of Julius II.

The great artist was destined to survive other patrons, though already advanced beyond the ordinary limits of human life. Paul III. died on the 10th of November 1549, after having occupied the papal throne for above fifteen years, during which Henry VIII. of England had

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been excommunicated, and his crown and kingdom declared by the Pope to be forfeited. The Jesuits had been formally established under his sanction, and the Council of Trent had assembled in order that the wisdom of the whole Church might be united to convince all men—if it could—that the doctrine of transubstantiation was equally consistent with reason and revelation. No sooner was a new Pope elected, who assumed the title of Julius III., than the enemies of the great artist united in a strenuous effort to displace him from favour and employment. Formal complaints were lodged against him with the new pontiff, and a commission was appointed to investigate the charges brought against him, particularly with reference to the building of St. Peter's. The foremost among the commissioners were the Cardinal Salviati, a nephew of Leo X., and Cardinal Cervino, who afterwards succeeded Julius III. as Pope, by the title of Marcellus II.; both of whom were inveterate opponents of Michael Angelo. The great artist, however, met the crooked policy of the Roman court in a way that probably none other ever ventured upon before or since. Though now in his seventy-sixth year he had lost none of the fire of youth, and with all the same haughty independence and conciousness of his own worth with which he had retorted to the fiery impetuosity of Julius II., he replied, "I am not bound to tell your Eminence or any one else what I propose to do; it is your place to see that money be provided, to *take care of the thieves*, and to leave the building of St. Peter's to me!" The Pope at once dismissed the accusers, and gave the architect assurance of his confidence and favour: but only five years thereafter he also passed away from the proud eminence of the sovereign pontiff's throne, and Michael Angelo was left in his eighty-first year to meet fresh troubles and vexations. The new Pope was the Cardinal Cervino, the personal enemy of Michael Angelo, and all hope of further

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patronage at Rome, or of his continuation as architect of St. Peter's, was at an end. He was already meditating a return to Florence, and was arranging for his final departure from Rome, when, within a month after the election of Cervino, he also passed away from the scene of earthly splendour and power, and Michael Angelo once more had new requirements laid on him by another pontiff, Paul IV.

CHAPTER X.

THE CLOSE.

It was a strange patron of Art who now occupied the papal throne. One of the most singular characters for energy and intolerant zeal that ever occupied that bad eminence. Ranke says of this Pope;—"Paul IV. already numbered nine-and-seventy years, but his deep-sunk eyes retained all the fire of youth. He was very tall and thin, his step was rapid, and he seemed all sinew. In his personal habits, he bound himself by no rule, often slept by day and studied by night, and woe to the servant who should have entered his room before he had rung his bell. In like manner in all other matters he followed the impulse of the moment, but this was always governed by a habit of mind formed by the practice of a long life into a second nature. He seemed to know no other duty, no other occupation, than the restoration of the old faith to its former domination. Such natures arise from time to time, and we occasionally meet with specimens of them in our own day. They form their conceptions of the world and all its purposes from a single point of sight; their individual instincts are so powerful, as to tincture all their views; they are indefatigable speakers, and always possess a certain freshness of manner, pouring forth in inexhaustible streams the system of thought that

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has grown up in them by a sort of fatality. How vastly important do they become at times, when all their actions are purely and absolutely dependent on their opinions, and their will becomes united with power! What might there not have been expected of Paul IV., who had never known what it was to pause from any motives of discretion, who had always carried out his opinions with the utmost impetuosity, now that he was exalted to the topmost station? It was matter of wonder to himself how he had arrived there, since he had never bestowed the least favour on a single cardinal, and had never shown a trace in his conduct, of anything but the utmost austerity. He believed it was not the cardinals but God himself who had chosen him, and called him to the accomplishment of his purposes.

'We promise and vow,' he says, in the bull published on the commencement of his pontificate, 'to make it in truth our care, that the reform of the universal Church, and the Roman court, shall be set on foot.' He marked the day of his coronation by the issuing of commands respecting convents and orders. He sent without delay two monks from Monte Cassino into Spain, to restore the decayed discipline of the convents in that country. He appointed a congregation for general reform, consisting of three classes, each constituted by eight cardinals, fifteen prelates, and fifty learned divines. The articles which were to be discussed by them, and which related to the collation to benefices, were communicated to the universities. He set to work, as we see, with great earnestness. It seemed as if that ecclesiastical spirit, which had for a considerable time made good its influence among the inferior classes of the clergy, had now taken possession of the papacy likewise, and would forthwith assume the sole direction of Paul IV's. pontifical career."

Yet this was the very man who involved the see of Rome in a war that compelled him at length to trust its

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safety to the mercenary troops of Protestant Germany; and who re-established and enlarged the functions of the Inquisition with a dreadful earnestness of purpose that made himself an object of universal detestation. The following are some of the incidents recorded of Michael Angelo under his pontificate. "On his return to Rome, he principally employed himself on a group of sculpture, which he meditated for an altar-piece, to honour the chapel which should be the place of his own interment. The subject was a dead Christ taken down from the Cross, and supported by the Virgin Mary, assisted by Nicodemus and Mary Magdalene. This group for many years was the occupation of his leisure hours; but the marble was unfavourable for his purpose, and he at length grew impatient, and laid it aside; the group, however, in its unfinished and imperfect state, is preserved in the Cathedral of Florence.

To assist Michael Angelo in the great work of St. Peter's, Paul IV. took into his service Pirro Ligorio, an architect better known by his designs and the books he published on architecture, than by the buildings he constructed. This person was no sooner employed than he began to alter Michael Angelo's plans, and adopt his own; treating him as an old man in his second childhood, no longer worthy to be consulted. This impertinence, added to the vexation he continually experienced from the faction, which was constantly endeavouring to remove him from his situation, so disgusted him, that he was determined to be relieved from his partner, or resign; he therefore immediately made a representation to the Pope, requesting to know which of the two architects his Holiness preferred; upon which Ligorio was dismissed. In this advanced period of his life, the only desire he had to continue in his situation was to establish his design beyond the possibility of change. The following letter to Vasari is expressive of these feelings, and accompanied

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by a sonnet, as a specimen of the mode he adopted to amuse himself; according to the opinion of his adversaries, the best adapted to the impaired state of his mind.

'It is the will of God that I still continue to be; and I know that I shall be justly called foolish and out of my mind for making sonnets; but as many say I am in my second childhood, I am willing to employ myself agreeably to my state. By yours I feel conscious of the love you bear me, therefore I wish you to know that it is my filial desire to rest these my feeble bones by the side of those of my father, and I pray you to see that it be done.

'For me to leave this place would be the cause of ruin to the Church of St. Peter's, which would be a great pity, and a greater sin; as I hope to establish it beyond the possibility of changing the design, I could wish first to accomplish that end; if I do not already commit a crime by disappointing the many cormorants who are in daily expectation of getting rid of me.

'MICHAEL ANGELO BUONAROTTI.'

SONNET.

'Well nigh the voyage now is overpast,
And my frail bark, through troubled seas and rude,
Draws near that common haven where at last
Of every action, be it evil or good,
Must due account be rendered. Well I know
How vain will then appear that favoured art,
Sole idol long, and monarch of my heart,
For all is vain that man desires below
And now remorseful thoughts the past upbraid,
And fear of two-fold death my soul alarms,
That which must come, and that beyond the grave;
Picture and sculpture lose their feeble charms,
And to that love divine I turn for aid
Who from the cross extends his arms to save.'"

The expression of earnest thought which this sonnet contains, and its hopes so suited to the solemn anticipations of approaching death, afford a beautiful example of the devotional meditations of so great a man.

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The venerable artist had little to hope from the favour or countenance of the patron who had now engaged his services. The very purity of his motives in requiring the labours of genius tended to shackle their exertions. He desired the adornment of churches and chapels in order to realise his idea of the magnificence and glory of the modern Roman Catholic worship; but he brought to bear on them the same overruling spirit that presided over the tribunal of the Inquisition, and the horror of its autos-da-fés. "It was his boast," says the historian of the popes, "to let no day pass without promulgating some order towards the restoration of the church to its original purity. In many of his decrees we trace the outlines of those ordinances, to which the council of Trent shortly afterwards gave its sanction.

In this career, too, as might be expected, he evinced all the inflexibility peculiar to his nature.

Above all other institutions, he favoured the Inquisition which he had himself re-established. He often let pass the days appointed for the sittings of the *segnatura* and the consistory, but never the Thursday on which the congregation of the Inquisition assembled in his presence. He insisted on the utmost rigour in the proceedings of that body. He subjected new classes of offences to its jurisdiction, and endowed it with the barbarous prerogative of employing torture for the detection of accomplices. No respect of persons availed with him; he brought the highest barons before that tribunal, and he now had cardinals, like Morone and Foscherari, arrested and thrown into prison, doubts having occurred to him of their orthodoxy, though he had formerly employed those very men in criticising the contents of important books, such for instance as the spiritual exercises of Ignatius. He instituted the festival of St. Dominic in honour of that great inquisitor. He lived and moved in his re-

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forms, and his Inquisition; passed laws, imprisoned, excommunicated, and held autos-da-fés."

We may add, as a subject of special interest to us, that this same intolerant spirit extended its malign influence to England, and helped to fan into a flame the bigoted despotism and the feeble understanding of her who won the unenviable title of Bloody Mary.

This was a patron little suited to the fiery ardour and indomitable independence of Michael Angelo, and we may readily anticipate the fruits that were likely to ensue from his encouragement of the Arts, when we find that his intolerant spirit of reform extended the same censorship to the study of the artist as to the cell of the monk, or to the privacy of domestic liberty. His death was hailed with universal acclamations. The Roman populace hurled his statue from its pedestal, and ignominiously dragged the head, adorned with the triple crown through the streets. His death was the signal for a jubilee throughout Italy, and even he who had escaped the malevolence of his enemies by the sudden death of Marcellus II., and the elevation of Paul IV. to the pontifical throne, felt the death of his patron a happy relief. His death, says the biographer of the great artist, "was a source of tumultuous joy to the Roman people, and to Michael Angelo of less regret than that of any former Pope: one of the first acts of whose pontificate was to deprive him of the chancellorship of Rimini, without assigning any cause; and the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel narrowly escaped from destruction by his monastic views of human life. In the commencement of his reign, he conceived a notion of *reforming* that picture, in which so many academical figures offended his sense of propriety. This was communicated to Michael Angelo, who desired that the Pope might be told, 'that what he wished was very little, and might be easily effected; for if his holiness would only *reform* the opinions of man-

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kind, the picture would be reformed of itself.' This mode of reasoning gave the Pope but little satisfaction, for he afterwards resolved to destroy it altogether, and was prevented with great difficulty by those cardinals who had influence in his councils: they represented that it would be a crime to whitewash the wall, and that his objections might be easily removed by painting over those parts only which appeared to be improper; and, by their advice, Daniello da Volterra was employed, and the picture saved."

Thus narrowly, and only partially, did the magnificent altar-piece of the Sistine Chapel escape the barbarous destruction instigated by the impure conceptions of this intolerant old man, notwithstanding the very pithy and just answer which he received from the painter. It was with great difficulty any one could be got to undertake the task of *reforming* Michael Angelo's Last Judgment, and the punishment which posterity has awarded to the daring undertaker of the unenviable task is perhaps as suitable a one as could be devised for the offence. The Pope was offended at the artist having represented the dead rising at the great day of judgment, unclad save in the garments of flesh that once more gather round the bones, as they came forth at the sound of the Last Trumpet.

Daniello da Volterra satisfied the spurious delicacy of the Pope by the addition of a piece of dress calculated to render the sublime scene ridiculous; and the humorous Italians have perpetuated the nature of his task by conferring on him the name of *Il Braghettone*, or the Breeches Maker!

The last pontiff now ascended the papal throne who was to share in the honour of commanding the services of the great Florentine. On the 24th of December, 1559, Pius IV., of the house of the Medici, was elected to the vacant pontificate, and Michael Angelo received his orders

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to continue the building of St. Peter's. New works also were required of him. He furnished designs for the Porta Pia erected in honour of the Pope, and for rebuilding the other gates of the city, though the latter were never carried into execution. New troubles, however, awaited him. He had once more to contend for the superintendence of the building of St. Peter's, which had been so often tried to be wrested from him. Once more he triumphed over the cabals of his enemies; and very shortly thereafter, on the 17th of February, 1563, he expired, being then within a few days of completing his eighty-ninth year.

Michael Angelo's character is abundantly defined in the striking incidents of his eventful life. It is a singular fact that in early years his constitution was remarkably feeble, and he owed undoubtedly much of his after-health and his great longevity to his regular and abstemious habits. The hours he devoted to sleep were much fewer than are usually required by men of deep thought; and the number of his works, as well as his great learning and universal acquirements, abundantly prove the untiring assiduity with which he occupied every moment of his waking hours. No subject escaped his notice that promised in any way to be conducive to the objects of his pursuit. He was a profound mathematician, a skilful anatomist, a sculptor, a painter, a poet, and an architect. In his intercourse with all who attempted to control the free exercise of his genius, or to check him in carrying out his own plans, he was haughty and irascible, and returned scorn with scorn, even when the sovereign pontiff was the object of his indignant retorts. He was altogether destitute of a mercenary spirit; while he defended himself against the slightest infringement of any contract which had been entered into, he gave up the greater part of his time for above eighteen years to superintend the building of St. Peter's, and refused for this any emolu-

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ment. He liberally assisted artists and literary men. One of his biographers remarks of him—"Although his high-minded philosophy made him often regardless of rank and dignity in others, and his knowledge of human nature in one view, concentrated the plausible motives and the inconstant professions of men, yet he was not morose in his disposition nor cynical in his habits. Those who knew him well, esteemed him most; and those who were worthy of his friendship knew how to value it. The worthless flatterers of powerful ignorance, and the cunning, who at all times trust to the pervading influence of folly, feared and hated him. He was impetuous in the highest degree when he felt the slightest attack upon his integrity, and hasty in his decisions, which gave him an air of irascibility; but to all who were in need of assistance from his fortune, or his talents, he exercised a princely liberality; and to those of honourable worth, however low their station, he was kind and benevolent; he sympathized with their distress, nor ever refused assistance to lessen the weight of oppression."

Such is a very imperfect sketch of this wonderful man. His genius was vast and powerful in its grasp. His fancy fertile, and his inventive faculty inexhaustible in its resources. He displayed the very highest powers of genius by the thorough originality of his conceptions, and by the entirely new path that he struck out in Art. He was followed by many mindless imitators, who only imitating his peculiarities, without comprehending the principles that guided him in his designs, produced thereby caricatures of the great master, that for a time brought himself into disrepute; but his fame was too well founded to suffer more than a temporary shadow from such passing clouds, and the influence of his vast genius on the whole character of Christian Art is only now commanding a just appreciation. He united all the branches of the Fine Arts in his labours, and executed in each department

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works unsurpassed in grandeur and true genius by those of any who have ever devoted their whole energy to one of these Arts. As the sculptor of the Moses, the painter of the Last Judgment and of the Sistine Prophets and Sibyls, and the architect of St. Peter's, his name stands pre-eminent among those who have most largely exhibited the ARTISTIC GIFT.

CHAPTER XI.

RAPHAEL.

ON the 28th of March, 1483, Raphael, the great rival of Michael Angelo for artistic fame, was born at Urbino, a small town of the papal states, which, though once the capital of a principality, and the seat of a Ducal Court, and even now an Archiepiscopal see, with a College and Academy of Sciences, owes its chief interest to the fact of its having been the birth-place of the painter. The house in which Raphael was born is still preserved as an object of peculiar interest to the traveller. His father was Giovanni de' Santi, a painter of some merit, whose works still exist. They exhibit great feebleness of execution and defective colouring, but are occasionally possessed of much grace and beauty. In the studio of Giovanni the chief portion of the first twelve years of the young artist's life was passed; and we view with lively interest the evidence of hereditary grace in the works of the father. There he acquired the first rudiments of his Art at that early age; but it was then his misfortune to become an orphan by the death of both his parents, and he was left to acquire a further knowledge of his Art from whatever teachers he might chance to interest in his behalf. The loss of his parents must have produced a pain-

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ful change on the early years of Raphael, however excellent the guardians were who undertook to supply their place. Contemporary writers concur in representing the training of the gifted boy by his parents as peculiarly gentle and affectionate. A recent biographer remarks—"While yet an infant, Giovanni Sanzio bestowed upon him all the earnest attention which an only and long-desired son can receive from a tender father. He knew that if the habits of men take their origin from the earliest moments of their existence, the education which is to guide them should also commence with their infancy; that it is in infancy they should hear from their mother those first lessons which derive their virtue from the domestic affections. With the maternal milk Raphael seems to have imbibed the taste for painting. His first playthings were the implements of his father's Art; and the latter delighted on all occasions to encourage tendencies which seemed the presage of an extraordinary vocation to the noble Art he himself so loved.

Ere many years had elapsed, he saw that the child whom, from the time it could walk, he had made the companion and assistant of his labours, was already too far advanced to remain his pupil, and his paternal love at once resolved to act upon the discovery. Desirous that his son should have for a master the most renowned painter of the day, Pietro Vanucci, called Il Perugino, he made a journey for this purpose to Perugia, where he acquired the friendship of this celebrated man, and, as a marked proof of this friendship, obtained his promise to receive Raphael into the number of his pupils."

The contrast between Raphael and Michael Angelo is in every respect remarkable, and it strikes us at the very outset of both. Michael Angelo excited almost from the first the jealousy of his master Domenico Ghirlandaio, an effect no doubt in part occasioned by the haughty independence of the pupil; while we find Perugino charmed

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with the gentle disposition and deportment of his scholar, no less than he was astonished and delighted at the precocity of his talents.

Among the instances of early genius no one offers a more satisfactory object of study than the life of Raphael. He was only seventeen when he painted his celebrated picture of St. Nicholas crowned by the Virgin, executed at Citta del Castello, but which was afterwards purchased by Pius VI., and is now in the Vatican. Other beautiful original works were the productions of the same period. One, a Holy Family, which excites universal admiration for its grace and beautiful composition, has this inscription on the staff of St. Joseph:—*Raphael Sanzio, of Urbino, painted this in his seventeenth year.* After executing numerous works at Florence and elsewhere, in which the rapid development of his great powers is manifested by a constant progression, he arrived at Rome in 1508, having been invited thither by Julius II. There he was employed on those magnificent works that still adorn the chambers of the Vatican, as well as on his celebrated cartoons, which form the most valued treasures of Art that are now possessed by the British nation. The immense number of his designs, exhibiting the most elaborate thought and the utmost carefulness in drawing, cannot but excite astonishment in every one who considers the shortness of his life. Many of these were executed in fresco by Julio Romano and others of his eminent pupils, whose affectionate regard for their master affords the best evidence of his singularly gentle and loveable disposition. While these designs were executed for frescos, tapestries, and other extensive mural decorations, he was painting portraits and producing those magnificent easel pictures which now form the most valued treasures in the galleries of Europe.

His last and greatest work was the Transfiguration, which he left unfinished at his death. Michael Angelo,

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as we have seen, survived the patronage or the enmity of a long succession of pontiffs, and reached at length the utmost term of human existence while prosecuting his varied undertakings. Raphael was only in his thirty-seventh year, when, in the very midst of that wonderful composition which is still regarded as the masterpiece of sacred painting, he was seized with a fever, and suddenly cut off at an age when many men of vigorous intellects are only preparing for the application of their minds to the production of works of adequate worth. As an example of early manifestation of great genius, sustained effort, and the ample performance of promised excellence during the brief years allotted to him, Raphael is altogether unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled, in the history of Art. He accomplished in a few years more than men of eminent talent have attained to during a long lifetime, and yet such was his natural sweetness and amiability of disposition, that he is described as having exhibited so ready an obligingness even towards comparative strangers, that he was never known to refuse his services when desired. He was ever ready with advice, encouragement, and assistance to others; and would readily throw aside his own work to assist his friends or direct his pupils. Nor must it be forgot that he excelled as an architect as well as a painter, while, like his great contemporary, he amused his hours of relaxation with the graceful luxury of verse.

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THE POETIC GIFT.

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"They fired the funeral pile."

THE POETIC GIFT.

CHAPTER I.—DANTE AND MILTON.

ALL thoughtful men, reflecting on the nature of the Poetic Gift, by which some few great minds have delighted and entranced all ages, have agreed in speaking of Poetry as the result of an inspiration, without which effort is vain, and the laboured rhythm but as the dry bones that show no presence of a living spirit.

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The word *Poetry* signifies *making* or *creating;* and the reflective and contemplative emotions that unite with great mental vigour in its production are present in the minds of many,—to some very small extent, perhaps, in the minds of all,—though few indeed find utterance for them, or even understand the nature of the power thus present in the mind.

The definition of Poetry has baffled alike the prosaic logician and the true master of its powers. As an instance of the former the following, which is among the most recent, may suffice:—"Poetry, in the usual and proper signification of the word, is applied to any composition in metre. It designates the outward form, not the style or the subject-matter treated. As however there are certain subjects, certain feelings and language, which belong to good Poetry, a prose composition, in which these characteristics are visible, is often termed 'poetical' or 'Poetry,' just as a bad poem is called 'prosaic.' In both instances we speak thus when we wish to express praise or blame, as the case may be, and we use the words metaphorically.

The art of Poetry is an imitative art. Its object, in common with all such arts, is to give pleasure by imitation. So far music, painting, sculpture, and Poetry agree; they differ in the means which each employs to effect the imitation. Music works by harmony and melody, painting by colour, sculpture by form, and Poetry by words arranged in metre. In no case, however, is it the proper province of art to produce illusion, that is to say, the person whose feelings are to be affected always remains conscious that his emotion is not the result of anything really passing, but is merely analogous to that emotion which the reality would produce."

This, we imagine, can satisfy no one. Wordsworth has styled it "The spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, originating from emotion recollected in tran-

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quillity." A more elaborate attempt has been recently made by another true poet to define what his art really is, and though he has been only partially successful, his thoughts on the subject are well worthy of study. Leigh Hunt remarks, in the Essay annexed to his beautiful selections entitled "Imagination and Fancy:"—"Poetry, strictly and artistically so called, that is to say, considered not merely as a poetical feeling, which is more or less shared by all the world, but as the operation of that feeling, such as we see it in the poet's book, is the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in uniformity. Its means are whatever the universe contains; and its ends, pleasure and exaltation. Poetry stands between nature and convention, keeping alive among us the enjoyment of the external and spiritual world; it has constituted the most enduring fame of nations; and, next to love and beauty, which are its parents, is the greatest proof to man of the pleasure to be found in all things, and of the probable riches of infinitude.

Poetry is a passion, because it seeks the deepest impressions; and because it must undergo, in order to convey them.

It is a passion for truth, because without truth the impression would be false or defective.

It is a passion for beauty, because its object is to exalt and refine by means of pleasure, and because beauty is nothing but the loveliest form of pleasure.

It is a passion for power, because power is impression triumphant, whether over the poet as desired by himself, or over the reader as affected by the poet.

It embodies and illustrates its impressions by imagination, or images of the objects of which it treats and other images brought in to throw light on those objects, in

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order that it may enjoy and impart the feeling of their truth in its utmost conviction and affluence.

It illustrates them by fancy, which is a lighter play of the imagination, or the feeling of analogy coming short of seriousness; in order that it may laugh with what it loves, and show how it can decorate it with fairy ornament.

It modulates what it utters, because, on running the whole round of beauty, it must needs include beauty of sound; and because, in the height of its enjoyment, it must show the perfection of its triumph, and make difficulty itself become part of its facility and joy.

And lastly, Poetry shapes this modulation into uniformity for its outline and variety for its parts, because it thus realizes the last idea of beauty itself, which includes the charm of diversity within the flowing round of habit and ease."

However little this elaborate attempt at definition may satisfy the mind, it still possesses truth and force. The representation of Poetry as the utterance of a passion for truth and beauty thirsting for the power of full utterance, is perhaps as near an approach as we can make in words to that which we feel. It is "the music in his soul," which Shakspere speaks of, that enables us to appreciate and enjoy the music of their thoughts which some of the world's poets have given utterance to; while far more of them, like the Wanderer of the Excursion, leave their "graces unrevealed and unproclaimed."

> "Oh! many are the poets that are sown
> By Nature; men endowed with highest gifts,
> The vision and the faculty divine;
> Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse,
> (Which, in the docile season of their youth,
> It was denied them to acquire, through lack
> Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,
> Or haply by a temper too severe,
> Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame)
> Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
> By circumstance to take unto the height
> The measure of themselves, these favoured Beings,
> All but a scattered few, live out their time,

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> Husbanding that which they possess within,
> And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
> Are often those of whom the noisy world
> Hears least."

The true Poets who have been among the teachers of men are well worthy of a far more earnest study than is often yielded to them. Among the multitude of rhymers who struggle for distinction in the shackles of metre, the multitude are apt to forget that the most noble and manly of men have been her Poets. Dante, Shakspere, Milton, Cowper, Goethe, were all men foremost in masculine vigour of intellect, in practical sagacity and power. Their genius placed them above, but never apart from, their fellow-men. "It is said that Poetry is of no practical utility. From those who look at things in so utilitarian an aspect as to see nothing more in the sun than a central hinge for the mechanical forces of our system, or a huge stove whereat the planets may warm their faces, such a verdict is not surprising. But this same sun has a higher, a moral, a religious utility; and this is the species of usefulness possessed by Poetry. The mind most poetical is fitted to become the most religious. The Poet and the Christian have alike a hidden life. Worship is the vital element of each. Poetry has in it that kind of utility which good men find in their Bibles, rather than such convenience as they have in their railway guides. It ennobles the sentiments, enlarges the affections, kindles the imagination, and gives to us the enjoyment of a life in the past, and in the future, as well as in the present. It cultivates those faculties within us, which, the more we cultivate them, the more do we find meanness a thing impossible. From the elevation on which it places us, the steepness of the descent required for the deed of baseness appears in its true shame and peril. Under its light and warmth we wake from our torpor and coldness to a sense of our capabilities. This impulse once given,

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a great object is gained. The precise direction which this revived activity shall take, we learn as a subordinate branch of knowledge from a contemplation of ourselves and our particular circumstances. Thus Schiller has truly said, 'Poetry can be to a man what love is to the hero. It can neither counsel him, nor smite with him, nor perform any labour for him, but it can bring him up to be a hero, can summon him to deeds, and arm him with strength for all that he ought to be.'"

The circumstances of that strange, vigorous, semi-barbarous age in which the great Italian Poet, Dante, lived, demand especial consideration, if we would appreciate the wonderful power and majesty of the "Divina Comedia," or understand the source of its many blemishes. Dante was in an especial manner, what all Poets in some degree are, the voice of his own age. He clothed in burning words the superstitions and the aspirations of his time, and thereby prepared for another generation the dawn of a clearer light. Dante is unquestionably an inferior Poet to Shakspere; he reflected his own age, and embodied in the most exalted language the creed of his time. He tinged the mighty vision of the future world less with the imperfections of his knowledge than with the harsher features developed in his own mind by the wrongs that he endured. Yet in peopling the shadows of the unseen world, and its inconceivable glories, with his own loves and hates, he was led back thereby constantly to nature for the passionate embodiment he drew. His wondrous power of genius is best seen when we reflect that Dante was born at Florence in the middle of the thirteenth century, the native of a petty Italian state, in a superstitious and barbarous age, and yet, if we except our own Shakspere, his poem remains unsurpassed among the great works of human intellect. Comparison may be more fairly instituted between Dante and Milton than between any other poets, and we feel no hesitation

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in placing Dante foremost. Milton wants the faults of Dante, he occasionally equals him in majesty, and his conception of beauty is more frequently manifest. But Milton's pictures are oftener overloaded; though he too can draw us with a single touch, as in his well-known picture of the dread warders of hell's gate, which affords an illustration both of the majesty in which he occasionally equals Dante, and of the overloading his first thoughts with similes of inferior power, by which he frequently falls behind his great precursor.

> "Before the gates there sat
> On either side a formidable shape;
> The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair;
> But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
> Voluminous and vast! a serpent arm'd
> With mortal sting: about her middle round
> A cry of hell-hounds never ceasing bark'd
> With wide Cerberian mouths full loud, and rung
> A hideous peal: yet, when they list, would creep,
> If ought disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
> And kennel there; yet there still bark'd, and howl'd
> Within, unseen. Far less abhorr'd than these
> Vex'd Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts
> Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore:
> Nor uglier follow the Night-hag, when call'd
> In secret, riding through the air she comes
> Lur'd with the smell of infant-blood, to dance
> With Lapland witches, while the lab'ring moon
> Eclipses at their charms. The other shape
> (If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none
> Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
> Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd.
> For each seem'd either:) black it stood as night;
> Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as hell,
> And shook a dreadful dart: what seem'd his head,
> The likeness of a Kingly crown had on"

Nothing could surpass the sublime mystery of the latter picture, wherein, as with a touch, he brings before us a realization of what seems undescribable and inconceivable.

It requires, however, a thorough consideration of the

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very different circumstances that environed the great Florentine and the immortal English Poet, when we come to consider their lives. Both of them bore a leading part in times of national commotion. Both endured the utmost injustice from the men of their own age, and died nearly unappreciated and unknown as the possessors of that noble Poetic Gift for which they have been venerated by all succeeding ages. Both nobly suffered adversity. Yet when this comparison is instituted, the Christian Poet of England far excels the Italian, in his noble but vindictive scorn, peopling the regions of eternal woe alike with public offenders and personal foes.

CHAPTER II.

DANTE AND BEATRICE.

THE peculiar evidences of early genius have been in no case more marked than in Dante. He was one of those men of surpassing vigour and power of intellect who appear fitted for any great task that may be assigned to them in the varied chances of human life. In this respect he strikingly resembles the Poet of England, to whom we have already compared him. Both of them bore a prominent share in the government of their native countries, and in early life made Poetry only the pleasant relaxation of their vigorous minds; yet both turned in maturer years to Poetry as a worthy object of the very highest efforts of their great intellects, when they had been turned aside by adverse circumstances from taking their place among the senators and rulers of their people.

Dante very early manifested proofs of genius, and a vigorous intellect. His capacity for learning was far beyond what is usually displayed by youths of superior

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mental powers. He had the misfortune to lose his father early in life, and the sole notice of his mother occurs in one remarkable passage, strangely characteristic of the fierce spirit of his age, and of his own ideal of virtue. Dante, while passing through the regions of eternal punishment, guided by the spirit of his great precursor, Virgil, spurns at one of the lost spirits whom he had known in life, whereupon his guide

> "Then with his arms my neck
> Encircling, kissed my cheek, and spake: 'O soul,
> Justly disdainful! blest was she by whom
> Thou wast conceived.'"

It is probable that he was early left an orphan by the death of both parents, and so consigned to the guardianship of strangers. He pursued his education under his able preceptor, Brunetto Latini, a celebrated scholar of the time, and rapidly acquired an extensive knowledge of the scholastic learning most zealously cultivated by the scholars of that age. At the same time he cultivated all the manly exercises which were then deemed the most fitting and honourable occupation for youths of noble birth, so that he afterwards bore his part in the contests in which his native country was involved with the neighbouring states of Italy.

It is asserted by some writers, that Dante afterwards studied at Bologna, then a celebrated seat of learning; but no certain information has been preserved concerning the circumstances under which his mind was formed in early life. One remarkable occurrence, however, which left an indelible impression on his future character, occurred in his ninth year, and has been too prominently pictured in his immortal works to escape the observation of his biographers: this was a romantic attachment he conceived at that early age for the famous Beatrice Portinari, on whom he has conferred the enviable celebrity of

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linking her name with the immortality of his great work. The youthful object of his early passion was only a few months older than himself; and it is difficult for the inhabitants of temperate and northern climes to conceive of an attachment so early formed, and yet so lasting in its influence, as this of the boy-poet.

Folco Portinari, the father of Beatrice, is described by his contemporaries as a man noted for his pious and charitable deeds. He was the founder of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, and other charitable institutions, during his lifetime, and was doubtless a man of influence, and held in just esteem by his fellow-citizens. It was at a banquet given in his house that the first interview took place between Dante and the fair object of his youthful love, and the impression then made on his heart was not obliterated by her death, which took place after an interval of sixteen years. The influence of this passion on his mind, appears to have been altogether beneficial and elevating. Some allusions in his writings would seem to imply that previous to this occurrence he had yielded to vicious temptations, from which this served to wean him; though his very early years may furnish sufficient guarantee against his having indulged in any great excesses.

This singular attachment, which proved of so lasting a nature, though formed in early youth, long before any such preference is shown in ordinary circumstances, must be considered as a striking evidence, both of the precocity of his mind, and the great tenacity with which he adhered to any idea when once fairly adopted in his mind. Our own Byron, a wayward creature of passion, displayed similar feelings at an equally early age, and probably with an intensity fully equal to that manifested by Dante towards the young Italian maid; but it was an evanescent feeling, exercising little influence on his afterlife. In the case of Dante we find a man of nervous intellect and lofty bearing, who faced the wrongs and suf-

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ferings with which he was visited with a proud, unquailing endurance; and yet this juvenile fancy continues with him through life, and becomes the key-note, as it were, of all the noblest productions of his genius. After all, however, the Beatrice of Dante's poems, the heavenly guide who becomes his conductor through the splendour and the bliss of Paradise, where the feet of the great heathen Poet may not tread, was probably as much the creation of the Poet's fancy as if none of the fair daughters of Florence had delighted his early years, and filled his youthful bosom with ardour and deight. From various allusions in several of Dante's minor poems, we can glean some idea of the lively child. She played with the boy, and grew up to treat him with much the same light-hearted waywardness and mirth as other young maidens similarly beloved have treated their bashful lovers. She laughed at his awkwardness and constraint, made sport with her companions at his fervent proofs of devotion to her, and after just affording him encouragement enough to excite hope, and beget an increased admiration, she married another, and died wholly unconscious of the ardent and lasting love that was to exalt her to the character of his heavenly guide, and hand down her name to latest ages in his immortal poem.

The early production of Dante's pen, "La Vita Nuova," is a valuable though very imperfect record of his mind at the period of his chief intercourse with Beatrice. It is a short narrative in prose, but interspersed with numerous sonnets and other poems, in regard to which the prose is little more than a comment and connecting link. In the fifth sonnet he thus describes his abashed feelings in the presence of Beatrice, and the consequent derision by her and her friends of his altered manner:—

"With other ladies you deride my looks,
And you reflect not, lady, whence it comes
That I appear to you a sight so strange

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And altered when your beauty I regard.
If you but knew it, pity would relent,
Nor with the wonted trial vex me more:
For when love finds me near you, he assumes
Such boldness, and so great security,
That my poor timid spirit he assails,
And some he deadly wounds, some drives away,
Till he alone remains to gaze on you.
Hence to another's semblance I am changed;
But not so changed that still I do not feel
The anguish of the exiled sufferers."

Others of the sonnets and poems give expression to similar feelings, and follow onwards to the death of Beatrice, disclosing the ardour of his feelings under her loss, and the endearing nature of his affection and admiration for her. The glimpses we have of his early life, however, are few and uncertain. It is only by the laborious investigation of his later biographers that it has been ascertained that his Beatrice was married to another,—that it has even been proved, indeed, in opposition to the captious notions of his critics, that she was an actual living being, and not a mere embodiment of the Poet's fancy. Could we recover the lost story of his early years, we might learn a passionate tale of love, pursued through every devious maze; of hope deferred, sickening the young Poet's heart, and faith building itself up from day to day on some slender passing smile, or heedless word of courtesy from the fair maid of his affections, until he discovered the fatal truth, that he had a rival in her affections; or, perchance, that the cool calculating policy of worldly wisdom guided the old Florentine, Folco Portinari, to seek for his daughter some better and more promising match than the grave young orphan, Dante Alighieri. We may presume, however, that he found little favour in her eyes; even a few months make a great difference at that time of life, when they leave the girl the elder of the two. Dante could forgive her; and he breathes not, in all his passionate flow of song, one

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repining or indignant note to tell of disappointed love; but we may well believe, that had the bitter feeling occasioned by a successful rival, or the cruelty of a selfish father been the cause of his failure, the same doom would have awaited them as he has so unsparingly dispensed to every opponent in the first and darkly tragic portion of his Great Poem.

Yet, although Beatrice was unquestionably a fair Italian maiden, on whom Dante gazed enraptured, with whom he conversed delighted, and who often wounded his passionate and sensitive heart by her woman's mirth, as the sole return for that ardent love that she failed to appreciate, still the Beatrice of Dante is in another sense an ideal creation of the Poet's fancy, a pure angelic being, whom he pictured to himself in the fervid reflections of his own keen and excited feelings, and drew a creature free from every blemish that pertains to earth. The object of all this burning passion, whatever her real virtues might be was already in her grave, and all her foibles and shortcomings buried with her there, "and forgot, as they never had been." She became to him the symbol of pure and holy things. "Death itself disappeared before the mighty love that was kindled in the heart of the Poet; it transformed, it purified all things." A recent writer, keenly alive to the worth of the great Florentine, in contrasting this strange passion of his with that of Petrarch, and others of the poets, remarks:—"It is not the pagan love—joyful, thoughtless, sensual—of Tibullus or Anacreon; it is mournful, troubled by an inexpressible sentiment of incompleteness. At the age when men breathe nothing but hope and pleasure, almost the first dream of Dante is death—the death of his mistress. His love is calm, resigned, submissive; death sanctifies it, instead of converting it into remorse. The love of Dante destroys nothing, it fertilizes all,—it gives a giant-like force to the sentiment of duty,—it expands the soul

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to the ends of the whole earth. 'Whenever and wherever she appeared to me, I no longer felt that I had an enemy in the world—such a flame of charity was kindled in my heart, causing me to forgive every one who had offended me.' When Beatrice—whose affection for the Poet may be inferred from the reproaches she addresses to him in 'Paradise'—was married, he fell seriously ill; when, a short time afterwards, she died, his life was feared for. 'He had become,' says Boccaccio, 'something savage to look upon.' But he felt that the death of Beatrice imposed fresh duties upon him, and that what he had now to do was to render himself more worthy of her; he resolved within himself to keep his love for her to the last day of his life, and to bestow upon her an immortality on earth. In his love for the beautiful—in his striving after upward purity—Beatrice was the nurse of his understanding, the angel of his soul, the consoling spirit, which sustained him in exile, in poverty—under a cheerless, wandering, denuded existence, if ever there was one." "The 'Vita Nuova,' says one of his critics, "makes a class apart—it is a perfume of the early youth of Dante—the dream of love sent to the privileged children of men, in order that they may never despair during life, and forget the immortality of their being. 'La Vita Nuova,' which Dante wrote most probably at the age of eight-and-twenty, and in which he relates, both in prose and verse, the emotions of his love for Beatrice, in an inimitable little book of gentleness, purity, delicacy, of sweet and sad thoughts,—loving as the note of the dove, ethereal as the perfume of flowers; and that pen, which in later years resembled a sword in the hands of Dante, here delineates their aspect, as Raphael might have done with his pencil. There are pages—those, for example, where is related the dream of the death of Beatrice—the prose of which is a finished model of language and style far beyond the best pages of Boccaccio."

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With strange but beautiful fancies he consoles himself for her death. This event, he observes, took place on the 9th of June 1290, in the ninth month of the Syriac year, and by a further coincidence of a similar term of years in the century in which she was born. This, he says, "was in consequence of all the nine spheres having been in harmony at her birth, and that it produced this miracle of beauty." The Vita Nuova concludes with Dante's declaration that a vision had determined him to cease from writing further upon Beatrice, until he should be able to do so in a manner more worthy of her; that all his studies were directed to that end; and that if his life should be spared, he hoped to celebrate her as no other lady had ever been celebrated.

We have dwelt longer on this interesting episode of love than a mere boyish passion could merit. But Dante's love of Beatrice is a thing altogether different; it remained a permanent power, influencing all his future life, and manifesting itself as the very spirit of love, moulding the harsh and stern features of his mind, and creating vivid realizations of majesty and beauty. Dante is said to have forsaken the world under the first impulse of his grief, on hearing of the death of Beatrice, deeming that he had done with its interests when she was gone, even though she had become the wife of another. He entered, it is said, the Franciscan order of Friars; but he became weary of their monotonous formalities, and happily forsook the cloister ere he was professed. Dante, amid the charities of domestic life, even before he was soured by the sufferings of an exile, was grave, stern, and vindictive in what he conceived his just anger. What would he have been under the constraints of a system that bows down man into a mere machine for the daily exercise of a petty round of formal duties,—more exasperating to an original mind possessed of energy and power, than the keenest wrongs,—leaving, as they do, no room for

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active exertion, but forcing the mind inward to prey upon itself, torturing by the very longings that vainly incite it to action?

CHAPTER III.

DANTE AND GIOTTO.

WHILE the mind of Dante was being permanently moulded by the singular attachment framed at so unusual an age for the fair daughter of Folco Portinari, he was by no means abandoning himself to the passionate indolence of the luxurious modern Italian; but, on the contrary, was foremost in all the most stirring events of public life, while at the same time neither war nor love could impede his earnest longings for knowledge and mental improvement. By his birth he was the representative of the noble family of Alighieri, one of whose ancestors, Cacciaguida Elisei, a Florentine knight, had followed the Emperor, Conrad III., to the Holy Land, in the year 1147, and fell bravely fighting against the Saracens. His talents, even more than his birth, entitled him to take a prominent share in the government of his native city; and he was no less endowed with manly courage and the ruder virtues that are most appreciated in such a state of society as prevailed in Italy in the thirteenth century, than in those rare gifts of genius which have rendered him memorable to succeeding ages. He marched with his fellow-citizens against the people of Arezzo, in the year 1289, and bore his part in the battle of Campandilo, and he continued to take an active part in the warfare which was of almost constant recurrence among the haughty rival Italian states and factions. In this battle he served in the foremost troop of cavalry, and was exposed to imminent danger. "Leonardo Are-

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tino refers to a letter of Dante's," according to one of his biographers, "in which he described the order of that battle, and mentioned his having been engaged in it. The cavalry of the Aretini at the first onset gained so great an advantage over the Florentine horse as to compel them to retreat to their body of infantry. This circumstance in the event proved highly fortunate to the Florentines; for their cavalry being thus joined to their foot, while that of the enemy was led to a considerable distance from theirs, they were by these means enabled to defeat with ease their separate forces." In this engagement we first discover, in connection with Dante, the rival partisans of the Guelph and Ghibelline factions, whose contests at a later period exercised so great an influence on his future life. In the following year he again joined the Florentine army, and bore his share in another engagement between his countrymen and the citizens of Pisa, and was present at the taking of the Castle of Caprona from the Pisans.

Meanwhile his keenest efforts were directed at every moment of relaxation from the cares and duties that followed his first entry into public life, to the acquisition of every species of knowledge within his reach. His eagerness to overtake all the learning of his age is said to have led him, at one period of his life, to visit both Oxford and Paris,—then the chief seats of learning in Europe. Whether such be true, and, as is affirmed by some of his Italian biographers, he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Paris, and was only prevented pursuing his studies farther by the failure of his pecuniary resources; it is certain, at least, no opportunity was lost by him which promised to add to his stores of knowledge. Learning, like every other pursuit he engaged in, was followed up with all the ardour and assiduity of which his great mind was capable, and there is little reason to doubt that he was one of the most learned, as well as the most gifted,

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men of that age. His vigorous intellect and great thirst for knowledge early attracted the notice of his contemporaries. About the age of eighteen he contracted an intimate friendship with Guido Cavalcante, a young nobleman of an inquisitive and philosophic turn of mind, whose reputation still survives in his native land. Of far greater interest, however, is the acquaintance he formed about the same period with his gifted contemporary Giotto, the reviver of Italian Art, to which we have already referred in the previous section, on Artistic Genius. Their intercourse was of an intimate nature, and renewed occasionally at different periods, under very diverse circumstances. We cannot doubt but that they mutually influenced each other, though the painter probably derived far more advantage from the Poet, than he could return to him in the most intimate interchange of thought. One invaluable advantage resulted from their intercourse, to which we have already referred. We owe to the pencil of Giotto the sole portrait of the great Florentine which preserves the record of his noble lineaments while yet they were marked with no other lines but those of deep thought, softened into beauty by the vivid anticipation of his ardent mind.

One of the most extraordinary monuments of the middle ages is the Campo Santo of Pisa. It is a large open area adjoining the Cathedral, measuring about four hundred feet in length, by one hundred and twenty feet in breadth. It is surrounded by an arcade built in the Italianised Gothic of the period when it was erected, and nearly corresponds in general character to the cloisters usually attached to cathedrals and large conventual churches. Portions of the surrounding building are fitted up as chapels for the services of the dead, and still further to adapt the Campo Santo, or Holy Field of Pisa, as a worthy and fitting place for the repose of the dead, according to the extravagant superstition of the thirteenth century

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the open area was filled with earth brought from the Holy Land by the merchant ships of Pisa, that traded to the Levant at that period of prosperity and wealth of this ancient city. This singular resting-place of the dead has long ceased to be used as a place of sepulture, and the sacred earth is now covered with a smooth green turf, but it cannot excite surprise that burial within its favoured precincts should have been eagerly coveted in earlier times. Upwards of six hundred monuments of the nobles and chief citizens of Pisa, ranged along its marble colonnade, attest the favour with which it was regarded in early times. On the inner wall which faces the windows of the cloistral range of buildings, monuments of a different, and much more interesting nature, attract the wanderer in Italy as objects of peculiar value and significance. These are a series of sacred paintings designed to illustrate the subjects of Hope and Anticipation, as well as of Terror, which are associated by nature and Revelation with such a Field of the Dead. Time, damp, and neglect have written on them even a more impressive lesson of decay and the fleeting nature of all earthly treasures, than they themselves were designed to represent. Of some of them nothing but disjointed fragments remain, and Giotto's pictures, which he is believed to have designed with the assistance of Dante, are among this number. Nevertheless, among the earlier works that remain, some are to be found that afford a very striking illustration of Dante's wondrous Poem, of Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell.

So profuse were the adornments of the Campo Santo of Pisa, that even the doors of the sacristies, and of the closets in which the vestments of the priests were kept, and the sides and covers of the chests wherein the vessels of the altar were deposited, were all painted with appropriate subjects from Scripture, or the legends of the church. Many of these panels now form the most valu-

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able treasures in the collections of early Italian Art. The following is selected from the vivid description, which Mrs. Jamieson has borrowed in part from a German critic, of the paintings on the cloister walls, and will be found, by the student of Dante's writings, of great value as an indication of the prevalent thoughts at the period. "The earliest paintings which still exist represent the Passion of our Saviour in a rude but solemn style. We find here the accompaniments usual in this subject from the earliest time, and which, from their perpetual repetition down to a late period, appear to be traditional; the lamenting angels, the sorrowing women, the Virgin fainting at the foot of the cross. Two angels at the head of the repentant thief prepare to carry his soul into Paradise; two demons perched on the cross of the reprobate thief are ready to seize his spirit the moment it is released, and bear it to the regions below. This fresco and another have been traditionally attributed to Buffalmacco, a painter of facetious memory, but this is now supposed to be an error.

A series of subjects from the Book of Job was painted by Giotto; of these only fragments remain. Then followed Andrea Orcagna; and the subjects selected by him were such as harmonized peculiarly with the destination of these sacred precincts: they were to represent, in four great compartments, what the Italians call *I quattro novissimi, i. e.* the four last or latest things—Death, Judgment, Hell or Purgatory, and Paradise; but only three were completed.

The first is styled the Triumph of Death (*Il Trionfo della Morte.*) It is full of Poetry, and abounding in ideas then new in pictorial Art. On the right is a festive company of ladies and cavaliers, who by their falcons and dogs appear to be returned from the chase. They are seated under orange-trees, and splendidly attired; rich carpets are spread at their feet. A troubadour and

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singing-girl amuse them with flattering songs; Cupids flutter around them and wave their torches. All the pleasures of sense and joys of earth are here united. On the left Death approaches with rapid flight,—a fearful-looking woman, with wild streaming hair, claws instead of nails, large bats' wings, and indestructible wire-woven drapery. She swings a scythe in her hand, and is on the point of mowing down the joys of the company. (This female impersonation of Death is supposed to be borrowed from Petrarch, whose 'Trionfo della Morte' was written about this time.) A host of corpses closely pressed together lie at her feet; by their insignia they are almost all to be recognized as the former rulers of the world, kings, queens, cardinals, bishops, princes, warriors, &c. Their souls rise out of them in the form of new-born infants; angels and demons are ready to receive them: the souls of the pious fold their hands in prayer; those of the condemned shrink back in horror. The angels are peculiarly yet happily conceived, with bird-like forms and variegated plumage; the devils have the semblance of beasts of prey or of disgusting reptiles. They fight with each other: on the right the angels ascend to heaven with those they have saved; while the demons drag their prey to a fiery mountain, visible on the left, and hurl the souls down into the flames. Next to these corpses is a crowd of beggars and cripples, who with outstretched arms call upon Death to end their sorrows; but she heeds not their prayer, and has already passed them in her flight. A rock separates this scene from another, in which is represented a second hunting-party descending the mountain by a hollow path: here again are richly-attired princes and dames on horses splendidly caparisoned, and a train of hunters with falcons and dogs. The path has led them to three open sepulchres in the left corner of the picture; in them lie the bodies of three princes, in different stages of decay. Close by, in ex-

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treme old age and supported on crutches, stands the old hermit St. Macarius, who, turning to the princes, points down to this bitter 'Memento Mori.' They look on apparently with indifference, and one of them holds his nose, as if incommoded by the horrible stench. One queenly lady alone, deeply moved, rests her head on her hand, her countenance full of a pensive sorrow. On the mountain heights are several hermits, who, in contrast to the followers of the joys of the world, have attained in a life of contemplation and abstinence to a state of tranquil blessedness. One of them milks a doe, squirrels are sporting round him; another sits and reads; and a third looks down into the valley, where the remains of the mighty are mouldering away. There is a tradition that among the personages in these pictures are many portraits of the artist's contemporaries.

The second representation is the Last Judgment. Above, in the centre, Christ and the Virgin are throned in separate glories. He turns to the left, towards the condemned, while he uncovers the wound in his side, and raises his right arm with a menacing gesture, his countenance full of majestic wrath. The Virgin, on the right of her son, is the picture of heavenly mercy; and, as if terrified at the words of eternal condemnation, she turns away. On either side are ranged the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles and other saints—severe, solemn, dignified figures. Angels, holding the instrument of the Passion, hover over Christ and the Virgin: under them is a group of archangels. The archangel Michael stands in the midst holding a scroll in each hand; immediately before him another archangel, supposed to represent Raphael, the guardian angel of humanity, cowers down, shuddering, while two others sound the awful trumpets of doom. Lower down is the earth, where men are seen rising from their graves; armed angels direct them to the right and left. Here is seen King Solomon,

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who, whilst he rises, seems doubtful to which side he should turn: here a hypocritical monk, whom an angel draws back by the hair from the host of the blessed; and there a youth in a gay and rich costume, whom another angel leads away to Paradise. There is wonderful and even terrible power of expression in some of the heads; and it is said that among them are many portraits of contemporaries, but unfortunately no circumstantial traditions as to particular figures have reached us. The attitudes of Christ and the Virgin were afterwards borrowed by Michael Angelo, in his celebrated Last Judgment; but notwithstanding the perfection of his forms, he stands far below the dignified grandeur of the old master. Later painters have also borrowed from his arrangement of the patriarchs and apostles—particularly Fra Bartolomeo and Raphael.

The third representation, directly succeeding the foregoing, is Hell. It is said to have been executed from a design of Andrea, by his brother Bernardo: it is altogether inferior to the preceding representations in execution, and even in the composition. Here, the imagination of the painter, unrestrained by any just rules of taste, degenerates into the monstrous and disgusting, and even the grotesque and ludicrous. Hell is here represented as a great rocky caldron, divided into four compartments rising one above the other. In the midst sits Satan, a fearful armed giant—himself a fiery furnace, out of whose body flames arise in different places, in which sinners are consumed or crushed. In other parts, the condemned are seen spitted like fowls, and roasted and basted by demons, with other such atrocious fancies, too horrible and sickening for description. The lower part of the picture was badly painted over and altered according to the taste of the day, in the sixteenth century; certainly not for the better."

Such were the strange, beautiful, and horrible fancies

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that were indulged in by the Italians of the thirteenth century, which Giotto and others strove to depict with their pencils, and which Dante has embodied for all times in his immortal poem. We must follow him, however, into active life. There his poem was conceived, and there his burning words acquired new force, and his hatreds keener ferocity, amid the clash of contending parties, and the wrongs of triumphant rivals.

Soon after the battle of Campoldino, wherein Dante bore so distinguished a part, and in which the party of Ghibellines of Arezzo were defeated, and their Bishop slain, he returned to Florence to share in the honours and cares of government. He was at that time one of the most learned men of his age, as superior to the great majority of his fellow-citizens in intellectual acquirements as in the native vigour of his mind. To understand the circumstances in which he was placed we must bear in remembrance the state of parties in Tuscany at the period. The Guelphs were at that time triumphant in Florence, having driven away their rivals. In the neighbouring city of Arezzo, however, the Ghibellines had secured the mastery, and thus the close vicinity of such rancorous opponents preserved their jealousies in constant vigour and bitterness. The reader, however, need only be desired to bear in remembrance the existence of such combustible elements within the Tuscan state. But for the influence their mutual contentions exercised over the fate of Dante, the contentions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines would excite little more interest now than the most petty squabbles of a barbarous tribe. Arrangements were made between these rival factions from time to time, when their jealousies were reconciled under the influence of equally selfish motives.

By intermarriage, occasional pacific agreements, and in various other ways, a temporary peace was secured between them; but the wrongs with which the successful

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party celebrated every triumph over their opponents almost precluded the possibility of a hearty reconciliation; the interests of the one always appearing to demand the destruction of the others. The usual fate of the losing party was confiscation, exile, and the burning or razing of their houses to the ground; while, in cases of most active opposition, torture and death were freely awarded; and thus, according to the notions of the age, a legacy of revenge was bequeathed from father to son, which the Poet himself was not slow to acknowledge in the case of one of his relatives.

As usual in similar cases, the successful party had not long enjoyed their triumph ere jealousies and heart-burnings broke out among themselves, and the strength of the banished party was often augmented by the banishment of their late opponents, who arrived among the exiles ready for the most zealous alliance with them against those whom they regarded with the more vehement indignation as having once been their own friends and allies.

Meanwhile, however, we shall turn for a little to private occurrences not without a share in moulding the destiny of the great Florentine.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXILE.

WHILE Dante nursed, amid the sternest passions of his blighted age, the singular affection of his boyhood for the Beatrice whose name he has "married to immortal verse," we find him dealing with the realities of life as a shrewd man of the world. The fair Beatrice—object of his youthful passion—had given her hand to another, and soon after had been committed to the tomb. All is

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vague conjecture as to the nature of her feelings towards her passionate admirer. Did she indeed smile at his youthful ardour, and make free choice of Simon de Bardi for her lord and husband? Or did she, in reluctant obedience to a father's commands, and to the cold and heartless calculations of worldly policy, give her hand to him at the altar, while her heart remained his who had wooed her with such persevering devotion; and, brooding over the irrevocable sacrifice, did she pine away until she sunk into an untimely grave? The Poet, in all his many allusions to the angelic Beatrice, regards her with such a reverential admiration, that no thought betrays the secrets of that love that survived her marriage to a rival, and seemed to increase in intensity when she was laid in the tomb of her fathers at Florence, and he a wandering exile, for ever excluded from the loved city of his nativity. But it is also to be borne in remembrance that, in all his allusions to her, he never betrays the fact that she had become the wife of another. Whatever might be the motives that influenced the step, in the year 1291, Dante received in marriage, Gemma, a daughter of the noble and powerful family of the Donati, by whom he had a numerous family. She was the kinswoman of his political rivals, and it has been affirmed by some of his biographers, on no sufficient evidence, that it was a mere step of worldly policy, adopted by the advice of his friends, to strengthen his position by an important alliance, and to wean his thoughts from an early passion that, to them, seemed to be wasting his energies in unavailing regret. This conclusion, however, though often repeated, seems to rest on no sufficient foundation. The vigour, as well as the stern independence of Dante's character, as manifested in every action of his life, tend completely to contradict the thought of his being led into such a step by the fears or speculations of his friends: and we turn with pleasure to the more congenial suggestion of his poet-bio-

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grapher, Leigh Hunt, who remarks, "it seems not improbable, from some passages in his works, that Gemma Donati was the young lady whom he speaks of in the Vita Nuova, as taking pity on him on account of his passion for Beatrice." That his affection for the latter, however, whatever might be its nature and degree of intensity, was a far different and inferior thing when compared with the absorbing intensity with which the image of Beatrice dwelt in his mind, is abundantly shown by the permanency of the latter, and the prominent position which it maintains through all the grand conceptions of his wonderful intellect. Virgil, the great object of his intellectual admiration, becomes his guide through "the mid and nether spheres;" but, when he approaches to the heavenly paradise, with its transcendent beatitudes, the purified spirit of the long-loved and parted Beatrice is alone fit to guide him to the revelation of its unconceived glories. "He felt," says an intelligent reviewer, "that the death of Beatrice imposed fresh duties upon him, and what he had now to do was to render himself more and more worthy of her; he resolved within himself to keep his love for her to the last day of his life, and to bestow on her an immortality on earth."

It is an equally vain and useless conjecture to seek now to picture what might have been the result had the great Florentine been united to the object of such ardent and enduring love. To question that one capable of such lasting affection was above the reach of its soothing influences in the quiet scenes of domestic life, would be folly in the extreme. This, however, at least, may be certainly assumed, that, had Beatrice Portinari lived the wife of Dante, the world would have lost the angelic Beatrice of the Poet's fancy; and, when we turn to the bitter wrong on which the whole after-life of the Poet hinged, we are compelled also to own that neither would his alliance with the fair daughter of Folco Portinari,

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the wealthy Florentine, have averted from him the anguish of irrevocable exile, that turned the Poet's passionate love of his country into an enduring bitterness that rankled at his heart,—a life-long struggle of indignant love that refused to turn itself to hatred.

The alliance of Dante with Gemma Donati has been made a fruitful subject of groundless and unjust accusations by successive biographers. Cary, the able translator of his great poem, remarks:—"In his own city, domestic troubles, and yet more severe public calamities, awaited him. He was induced, by the solicitations of his friends, to console himself for the loss of Beatrice by a matrimonial connexion with Gemma, a lady of the noble family of the Donati; but the violence of her temper proved a source of the bitterest suffering to him; and in that passage of the Inferno, where one of the characters says.

> '———Me, my wife
> Of savage temper, more than aught beside,
> Hath to this evil brought,'

his own conjugal unhappiness must have recurred forcibly and painfully to his mind. It is not improbable that political animosity might have had some share in these dissensions; for his wife was a kinswoman of Corso Donati, one of the most formidable, as he was one of the most inveterate of his opponents." All this is as gratuitous as it is offensive and insulting. Giacopo Rusticucci, who is represented by the Poet as meeting him within the dread regions of woe, as he journeyed through them with his immortal guide, was a character well known by the Poet's contemporaries; he was a Florentine, held in high estimation during his life for his opulence and great generosity, and we cannot imagine Dante to have put such a remark into his mouth if it had not been a fact well known to his contemporaries. There is certainly not the slightest allusion, in the sententious exclamation, to

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any community of experience in the Poet, which, had such been really the case, the occasion might have been expected to call forth; and we may add, the enmity of a wife's kinsman is not a matter of such rare occurrence as to demand the theory of domestic misery to account for it. Shakspere has been adjudged an unkind and unfaithful husband, on no better authority, as it seems, than the fact that, in his will, he leaves to his wife "his second best bed!" Milton, too, the great successor of Dante, in dealing with the sublime mysteries of the unseen world, has been proclaimed a harsh parent and a heartless husband, because the blind Poet sought in the members of his family for one to supply his irreparable loss, and, with just indignation, complained when such aid was grudgingly given, or altogether withheld. On even less evidence has Dante, "the great but splenetic Poet," as his latest biographer harshly styles him, been condemned as one destitute of all the milder affections that keep alive the flame of love on the domestic hearth.

No trustworthy evidence exists to afford the slightest confirmation to such unfavourable accusations. The utmost contradiction prevails among the various writers who have attempted to show that Dante failed in affection to his wife, or that he did not enjoy domestic happiness while they lived together. Even the love of candour is sometimes fatal to the justness of an author, and from this Dante has suffered in the hands of his latest biographer. Leigh Hunt has drawn, from his own intimate knowledge of the Poet's great work, a conviction of the implacable vindictiveness of its author; neglecting to bear in mind the character of the age in which he wrote, though its lineaments are so strongly drawn in the incidents of the Poet's life;—forgetting that Dante was born at Florence "sixty-three years before the birth of Chaucer." It is indeed to be looked for that the great Poet shall be in advance of his age: that he who is to be its

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teacher shall be above the mean vices, no less than the narrow vision which characterizes it, and he has himself proudly told us, "that he never was really of any party but his own." But an injustice is done to the great Dante of the thirteenth century, with its Boniface VIII., its Guelphs and its Ghibellines, its Romish Purgatory and Hell, when we try him by the standard of Bible Christianity in the nineteenth century, and find him wanting.

Dante's alliance with the daughter of a powerful Guelph family sufficed as little as the possession of his mighty genius to shield him from the factious enmity of his rivals. The two great parties became subdivided into lesser factions. The Neri and the Bianchi,—literally the Blacks and the Whites,—two branches of the family of Cancellieri, and both sprung from the party of the Guelphs, conceived the most rancorous hatred of one another. The latter were proscribed by their rivals on their obtaining a partial advantage. Torture and murder were resorted to without check or hinderance. Their opponents' houses were spoiled and committed to the flames, and among the rest the dwelling of Dante fell a prey to their mad fury. While this strife was going on with such direful results between the newly organized factions of the Neri and Bianchi, he was absent on a mission at Rome, whither he had been sent by the leaders of the Bianchi, to counteract the machinations of their opponents. He was denounced by his enemies as guilty of corruption in the administration of public affairs, and was condemned to pay a heavy fine, and to suffer banishment for two years. By a second sentence, dated March 1302, he was pronounced guilty of peculation and usury. The proof of his guilt was declared to be "fama publica," public report, which in this case meant the slander of his enemies. Nevertheless, he was condemned on such evidence to be *burnt alive*, should he ever return to Florence.

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He never did return. Repentant Florence has sought in vain to recall his ashes.

"From that day forth," says Leigh Hunt, "Dante never again beheld his home or his wife. Her relations obtained possession of power, but no use was made of it except to keep him in exile. He had not accorded with them, and perhaps half the secret of his conjugal discomfort was owing to politics. It is the opinion of some, that the married couple were not sorry to part; others think that the wife remained behind solely to scrape together what property she could, and bring up the children. All that is known is that she never lived with him more;"—never, in all probability, saw him more; for Dante lived on, anticipating the time when he should proudly return to the bosom of his beloved Florence, and died struggling for the attainment of his desire.

Dante now commenced his solitary wanderings. He renounced his Guelph connections, and uniting himself for a time to the exiled Ghibellines, he strove to unite them in a great effort against their enemies and the oppressors of their country; but his hope of success from such a quarter, either for himself or his country, soon failed. With his heart filled with large hopes and patriotic desires, in which he anticipated seeing the distracted kingdom of Italy united into one great and happy empire, he went from kingdom to kingdom, suffering every vicissitude to which the friendless exile can be exposed. His last biographer, to whose opinion we have already repeatedly alluded, remarks,—

"With these feelings in his heart, no money in his purse, and no place in which to lay his head, except such as chance patrons afforded him, he now began to wander over Italy, like some lonely lion of a man, 'grudging in great disdain.' At one moment he was conspiring and hoping, at another, despairing and endeavouring to conciliate his beautiful Florence: now again catching hope

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from some new movement of the emperor's, and then, not very handsomely threatening and re-abusing her; but always pondering and grieving, or trying to appease his thoughts with some composition, chiefly of his great work. It is conjectured, that whenever anything particularly affected him, whether with joy or sorrow, he put it, hot with the impression, into his 'sacred poem.' Every body who jarred against his sense of right or his prejudices, he sent to the infernal regions, friend or foe; the strangest people who sided with him, (but certainly no personal foe,) he exalted to heaven. He encouraged, if not personally assisted, two ineffectual attempts of the Ghibellines against Florence; wrote, besides his great work, a book of mixed prose and poetry, on 'Love and Virtue,' the 'Convito,' or Banquet;' a Latin treatise on Monarchy, 'De Monarchia,' recommending the 'divine right' of the emperor; another in two parts, and in the same language, on the Vernacular Tongue, 'De Vulgari Eloquio;' and learnt to know meanwhile, as he affectingly tells us, how hard it was to 'climb other people's stairs, and how salt the taste of bread is that is not our own.' It is even thought not improbable, from one awful passage of his poem, that he may have 'placed himself in some public way,' and, 'stripping his visage of all shame, and trembling in his very vitals,' have stretched out his hand 'for charity,'—an image of suffering, which, proud as he was, yet considering how great a man, is almost enough to make one's common nature stoop down for pardon at his feet."

This memorable passage is constructed with designed obscurity, yet with fearful earnestness, the force of which is lost in Cary's metrical translation. Dante is thus addressed by one of the spirits in purgatory:—"Thou wilt know in the time of thy banishment, which is near at hand, what it is to stretch out thy hand to others, and tremble through every vein lest they should refuse thee."

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Yet there was dignity with him in every action of his life. "It was by such sacrifices he preserved his principles, and sustained the magnanimity of his character."

Dante was in truth a man altogether above his age. He was, he says, a man of no party, and on another occasion he exclaims,—it is difficult to discover which party is most in the wrong;—sentiments that in all probability afford an insight into the true secret of his irrevocable banishment from Florence. He was too noble a man to be a partisan, and therefore neither party could depend on his adherence to them in their crooked policy.

The wanderings of the great Poet during his protracted exile are very imperfectly traced. He is found at Padua, Arezzo, Bologna, some say at Paris, and even in England. Wherever he went he preserved the same proud dignity as an exile, which belonged to him as a Tuscan noble. Indignity he retaliated with scorn, and impaled his unfeeling persecutors on the daggers which his genius placed at his command. With ingenious but bitter keenness he represents his Inferno as gaping for its expectant victims, or already peopled with his living enemies, whose bodies appear to be in life only by the possession of demons. He retorts with proud sarcasm the insults, and scorns the stinted hospitality of grudging hosts, and shaking the dust off his feet, goes forth again to bide the sufferings of the homeless exile. But in every vicissitude Dante is still the same. His life consumes under the passionate longings with which he regards his native land; yet by no concession which derogates from his proud self-respect will he purchase that for which he pines.

We are indebted to the author of the beautiful amplification of "Francesca da Rimini,"—the most popular portion of all Dante's writings,—for a translation from his minor writings of one of the most touching passages that ever a broken-hearted exile penned. He remarks of it,—

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"It was probably in the middle period of his exile, that in one of the moments of his greatest longings for his native country, he wrote that affecting passage in the 'Convito,' which was evidently a direct effort at conciliation. Excusing himself for some harshness and obscurity in the style of that work, he exclaims, 'Ah! would it had pleased the Dispenser of all things that this excuse had never been needed; that neither others had done me wrong, nor myself undergone penalty undeservedly,—the penalty, I say, of exile and of poverty. For it pleased the citizens of the fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome—Florence—to cast me out of her most sweet bosom, where I was born, and bred, and passed half of the life of man, and in which, with her good leave, I still desire with all my heart to repose my weary spirit, and finish the days allotted me; and so I have wandered in almost every place to which our language extends, a stranger, almost a beggar, exposing, against my will, the wounds given me by fortune, too often unjustly imputed to the sufferer's fault. Truly I have been a vessel without sail and without rudder, driven about upon different ports and shores by the dry wind that springs out of dolorous poverty; and hence have I appeared vile in the eyes of many, who, perhaps, by some better report, had conceived of me a different impression, and in whose sight not only has my person become thus debased, but an unworthy opinion created of everything which I did, or which I had to do.'

"How simply and strongly written! How full of the touching yet undegrading commiseration which adversity has a right to take upon itself, when accompanied with the consciousness of manly endeavour and a good motive!"

Many interests were opposed to the restoration of Dante to his native land, as must ever be the case where proscription and forfeiture become the instruments of political

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wrath, and raise up every selfish desire to oppose the restitution of its victim's rights. At another period Dante renewed his efforts to obtain the revocation of his sentence. He addressed his countrymen in an eloquent and touching letter, beginning, "My people, what have I done to thee?" But it was in vain. The family of Adimari, who had obtained possession of his estates, opposed with all their influence an act of justice that might involve the sacrifice of their recently won plunder; and Florence knew not then the worth of that noblest son whom she was flinging from her bosom.

As a Poet indeed, it must be borne in remembrance, he was only very imperfectly known during his life-time. His great poem was not printed till long after he was in his grave, when the most of those he had exposed in it were safe beyond the consciousness of his injury, as he of their revenge.

The hope of returning with honour to his "beautiful Florence," remained uppermost in Dante's mind to the last; but with noble self-respect he would not stoop to an act inconsistent with his integrity, even to win the object for lack of which his great heart was breaking. He was offered permission to return, on condition of acknowledging his guilt, and submitting to receive absolution. Many of his friends urged his acceptance of these concessions. How he answered those who sought to persuade him to submit to such humiliating terms, does not appear; but we can readily conceive the scorn with which he would fling from him the proposal: a noble letter, however. which he wrote to an aged kinsman who had expressed an interest in his restoration, contains the following remarkable passage:—

"Your nephew and mine has written to me, what indeed had been mentioned by many other friends, that, by a decree concerning the exiles, I am allowed to return to Florence, provided I pay a certain sum of money, and

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submit to the humiliation of asking and receiving absolution; wherein, my father, I see two propositions that are ridiculous and impertinent. I speak of the impertinence of those who mention such conditions to me; for in your letter, dictated by judgment and discretion, there is no such thing. Is such an invitation, then, to return to his country, glorious for Dante, after suffering in exile almost fifteen years? Is it thus they would recompense innocence which all the world knows, and the labour and fatigue of unremitting study? Far from the man who is familiar with philosophy be the senseless baseness of a heart of earth, that could do like a little sciolist, and imitate the infamy of some others, by offering himself up as it were in chains: far from the man who cries aloud for justice, this compromise by his money with his persecutors. No, my father, this is not the way that shall lead me back to my country. I shall return with hasty steps, if you or any other can open to me a way that does not derogate from the fame and honour of Dante; but if by no such way Florence can be entered, then Florence I shall never enter. What! shall I not everywhere enjoy the sight of the sun and stars? And may I not seek and contemplate, in every corner of the earth, under the canopy of heaven, consoling and delightful truth, without first rendering myself inglorious, nay, infamous, to the people and republic of Florence? Bread, I hope, will not fail me."

The infamy attached to Florence and not to her noble son. Dante was left to find a grave among strangers, after a weary exile of fifteen years, and she has since attempted, repeatedly but in vain, to recover the ashes of him who "sleeps afar" from his ungrateful Florence.

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CHAPTER V.

MILTON.

In striking contrast in many respects to Dante, yet not altogether dissimilar in fate, is he whom England now rejoices to honour as her Christian Poet. Much, however, requires to be taken into consideration if the authors of the *Divina Comedia* and of *Paradise Lost* are to be compared. Above all it behoves us to remember the different character of the periods in which they lived. Dante was born at Florence in 1265; Milton at London in 1608. How vast had been the progress of the world during the interval! It had truly been as life from the dead; and while Dante had heralded the early beams of dawn, Milton enjoyed the splendour of a morning, not unclouded, yet in which light altogether predominated over darkness.

Comparatively few details of the early years of Milton have been preserved, yet sufficient is known to show that he gave manifest proofs of the power of genius and its ardent thirst for knowledge when a mere child. His father had been disinherited by his parents, who were bigoted Roman Catholics, in consequence of his embracing the Protestant faith, and the tutor who guided his early education was a Puritan, who afterwards retired to the Continent to escape the persecution to which he was exposed in England. With such instructors we need not wonder at his early displaying those views of civil and religious liberty which he advocated so strenuously throughout the whole period of his life. His mind was happily formed amid the high advantages of domestic education and example. His mother is said to have been eminent for piety and natural sweetness of disposition,

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and his father having endured so much for conscience sake, we may well believe that he imbibed the lessons of a religious education at his mother's knee, and grew up under the influence of those Christian principles which he so eminently manifested in after-life. He early exhibited a lively fancy, and quick powers of perception; his progress in every department of knowledge within his reach was so rapid as to outstrip the efforts of his instructors. Even at the premature age of twelve, he manifested such a desire for learning, that it required restraint rather than encouragement, and he seldom forsook his studies till midnight.

From the instructions of his domestic tutor, young Milton passed to St. Paul's school, and from thence, at the age of fifteen, he proceeded to Christ's College, Cambridge, there to acquire the highest branches of his education. Even thus early he gave evidence of his poetic genius, and during the first two years of his residence at Cambridge, he composed his poem on the Gun-powder-Plot, with other productions in verse, that have led an eminent critic to say of him,—"Milton's writings show him to have been a man from his childhood." Here he continued his studies till he attained his twenty-fourth year; when, having taken his degree of Master of Arts, he finally quitted the University, carrying with him the esteem and admiration of all who knew him

One of his first compositions of any length was the Mask of Comus, a wonderful proof of the early development of his poetic genius in all its power. This Mask was represented at Ludlow Castle, on Michaelmas Eve, 1634, by the Lady Alice Egerton and her brothers, the younger members of the Earl of Bridgewater's family. No one can visit the magnificent ruins of the once stately edifice of Ludlow Castle without regarding them with feelings of peculiar interest. They form the

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romantic centre of one of the sweetest landscapes in England, and the scene of many striking historical associations.

There Baxter, the eminent Puritan divine, entered as a pupil, under the care of the Chaplain of the Council, only some three years before the immortal composition of Milton was first presented by the youthful circle of the Earl's family, who had then just entered on his office as vicegerent or ruler of Wales. Some thirty years afterwards, Butler, a poet of far inferior power, yet possessing too the fire of genius, wrote there the first portion of his Hudibras. The old Castle, indeeed, has many diverse associations with men of different mould, but we turn from such to follow the great Poet into different scenes.

In 1637 Milton experienced a severe loss in the death of his mother, which appears to have exercised a strong influence on his mind. Hitherto he had evidently delighted in the quiet seclusion of home. From his father he inherited a passionate love of music, and with the organ—which long afterwards solaced his declining years, when shut out alike from the enjoyment of nature and the study of books,—he gratified his exquisite taste in the hours of relaxation from study. The death of his mother appears to have destroyed the charm of this sweet domestic retirement. He had long wished to improve his mind and enlarge his knowledge by observing the customs and institutions of other countries, and accordingly, soon after this bereavement, he obtained his father's consent, and set off with the intention of making the tour of Europe.

At this period Milton received a friendly letter of advice from the celebrated Sir Henry Wotton, formerly ambassador to the Republic of Venice, in which he intimates his knowledge of the authorship of Comus, adding, "that he had seen yet nothing parallel to it in our language." On his arrival at Paris, he was introduced

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by Lord Scudamore to the celebrated Grotius, then ambassador from Christina, Queen of Sweden. The French capital, however, seems to have excited in him but little interest; and after a very brief stay, he proceeded on his route, visiting Nice, Genoa, Pisa, and Florence. The last city excited his liveliest admiration. The place, the language and manners of the people, and the interesting circle of literary men to whom he was introduced, all afforded him a high source of gratification. He continued here above two months, and afterwards kept up frequent correspondence with several eminent men of learning to whom he had been introduced.

From Florence he proceeded to Rome, which impressed his mind as strongly by its decaying monuments of the past, as Florence did by its living beauty; there also he was at once admitted on equal terms to the society of the most learned men of the day, and derived the highest gratification from the rich stores of classical learning which were thrown open to him in the library of the Vatican.

After visiting Naples he was preparing to continue his travels through Sicily and Greece, when the news of the state of affairs in England, just then tending to the outbreak of the first Civil War, induced him to direct his course homeward, "deeming it," says his nephew, "a thing unworthy of him to be diverting himself in security abroad, when his countrymen were contending with an insidious monarch for their liberty." On his way home he again spent some time both at Rome and Florence, though against the advice of some friends who feared he had rendered himself obnoxious to the machinations of the Romanists by the free expression of his opinions. It little coincided with the courage and nobleness of his mind either to shun such danger, or by a line of duplicity, to avoid such offence. Without courting controversy, he never hesitated freely to express opinions when circum-

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stances seemed to require it, and though not without some danger, he returned home in safety, with his mind stored with enlarged views, and his imagination filled with the grandeur and beauty derived from beholding the noble remains of ancient Rome and the most splendid creations of modern Art. He visited and conversed with the great Galileo, then a prisoner of the Inquisition, at Arcetri, in the neighbourhood of Florence; and in spite of his religion and the bold expression of his opinions, he formed lasting friendships with some of the most eminent men in the south of Europe, and received on all hands marks of honour and esteem.

Milton's stay on the Continent, and the extent of his travels, were greatly abridged by the sad news that he continued to receive of the state of public affairs at home. The unfortunate King Charles I. was at that very time commencing the war that so long arrayed brother against brother in the unhappy kingdoms under his rule. He had already met one army, raised in his ancient kingdom of Scotland, to resist his own aggressions on liberty and rights of conscience, and Milton had only been absent fifteen months from home when he learned that the King was setting out on his second expedition against the Scots. On his return he immediately engaged his whole energies in the cause of liberty, employing his pen,—the most dangerous weapon that could then be wielded, under the terror of the Star Chamber commission, and similar illegal and tyrannical tribunals. No prose writings in the English language abound with bolder defences of liberty, or nobler language and sentiment, than those that Milton now engaged in. Faults indeed they have, which not even the strange character of the times, and the nature of the opposition he had to contend with, can justify or excuse; yet with them all he was a man ably fitted for his time, and nobly meriting the tribute paid to him by our great living Poet, Wordsworth, in his Sonnets

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to Liberty, penned in 1802, when a dark and cheerless cloud seemed settling down on England, and people looked hopelessly for one fit to stand in the breach and direct the leaders who aimed at its defence.

"Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

Great men have been among us; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none.
The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
These moralists could act and comprehend:
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour: what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous meekness."

CHAPTER VI.

THE GREAT REBELLION.

THE Civil War which was conducted by Hampden, Vane, Cromwell, Sidney, Milton, and men of like stamp, and which the most determined decryer of these great men feels forced to acknowledge was the sole alternative left, if the liberties of England were to endure, has yet been called THE GREAT REBELLION, and is still popularly known as such. Suffice it then that we retain the intel-

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ligible name. Milton was no stickler for niceties of mere logical definition so that great principles could be maintained, and would not gainsay that he rebelled against the encroachments on the national liberty.

Meanwhile we may glance at his domestic affairs. At the age of thirty-five he married Mary, the daughter of Richard Powell, a wealthy Royalist, and Justice of the Peace in Oxfordshire. They had only been married a month when the young bride returned to her father's house, professedly to pay a short visit. From all that appears, however, her friends would seem to have approved of the marriage mainly from politic motives consequent on the discomfiture of their own party, and when their hopes again revived they repented of the alliance with so determined a republican. This moreover seems certain, that his wife was a young and frivolous girl, little fitted to be the companion of such a man. The reasons assigned in her defence abundantly confirm this: it is stated that she had been accustomed to a great deal of company, with merriment and dancing, so that she found her married life solitary and irksome, and at length went home to her parents.

Whatever were the reasons for her departure, all attempts of Milton to prevail on her to return proved ineffectual; and, with a just feeling of indignation, he declared that he no longer held her as his wife.

Fully four years elapsed without Milton meeting with his wife, and he had taken the most decided steps to show his conviction that all ties between them were dissolved. Time, however, had led her to repent of her foolish step; and learning of his intention to visit a common friend, she suddenly appeared before him, and throwing herself at his feet, with tears besought his forgiveness. A perfect reconciliation took place between them, and so completely did he overlook all that had passed, that he soon after received into his own house her father and

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mother, and several of her brothers and sisters, affording them an asylum there, and exerting all his political influence in their behalf, when they were involved in the final overthrow of the royal cause.

The pen of Milton was now called into frequent requisition both by his own sense of the dangers and difficulties that were then most prominent, and occasionally in obedience to the urgent demands of the popular leaders.

In 1649 the grand climax of successive civil wars was at length accomplished in the death of the King. Milton was in no way implicated in this act of judicial judgment by the popular leaders on their King; but he viewed with disgust the lamentations of the Presbyterian party for the final accomplishment of the result which they had so long laboured to bring about; and to meet the exigencies of the period he published his "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates." "This work," he says, "was not published till after the death of the King, and was written rather to tranquillize the minds of men, than to discuss any part of the question respecting Charles,—a question, the decision of which belonged to the magistrate and not to me, and which had now received its final determination."

It was after the publication of this work that he was called by the Council of State to the important office of Latin Secretary, created at the time it was bestowed on him, the Council having determined to use the Latin language in all their international transactions, in preference to that of a rival nation.

In this responsible office it was that Milton penned the noble protests of the Commonwealth of England, against the persecution of the unfortunate Waldenses, which more, perhaps, than any public documents ever sent forth by official authority, redound to the glory of England. Again his pen was called into requisition as the defender of the Commonwealth. Charles, the son of the beheaded monarch, who afterwards succeeded to his crown, had

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employed the pen of Salmasius of Leyden, a man of great erudition, but little judgment, to appeal to the courts of Europe against the English nation. In reply to this work, Milton published in 1651 his Defence of the People of England, giving in it, perhaps, the noblest instance of self-sacrifice that ever patriotism offered. He had already greatly injured his eyes by his protracted studies, and his physicians now assured him that unless he abandoned this labour, he must lose his sight. "On this occasion," says Milton, replying to an antagonist who had made his blindness a reproach, "I reflected that many had purchased with a superior evil a lighter good, glory with death;—to me, on the contrary, greater good was proposed with an inferior evil; so that by incurring blindness alone, I might fulfil the most honourable of all duties."

The unanimous voice of the Council had called him to this work, and the reception it met with on the Continent was such as might have satisfied the highest ambition;—enemies no less than friends manifested their sense of its power. It was publicly burned at Paris and Toulouse. It was translated into Dutch for the special benefit of the countrymen of Salmasius, to his own special vexation, while the States-General ordered its suppression as a national disgrace. Its author received the highest encomiums from the most eminent men in Europe. Queen Christina of Sweden specially marked her admiration of his work; but above all, it completely accomplished the purpose for which it was written, so that his unfortunate opponent was utterly overwhelmed in the encounter.

The magnanimity which Milton displayed under the irreparable loss of his sight, aggravated as his sufferings were by the unkindness of his daughters, proves more than anything else could, how thoroughly his mind was imbued with the noblest principles of Christian faith and submission. He never repined under his severe trials,

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but received all as the wise decree of that heavenly Father who suffers not even a sparrow to fall unheeded to the ground. "It is not miserable," says Milton, "to be blind. He only is miserable who cannot acquiesce in his blindness with fortitude; and why should I repine at a calamity which every man's mind ought to be so prepared and disciplined as to be able to undergo with patience?—a calamity to which every man by the condition of his nature is liable, and which I know to have been the lot of some of the greatest and best of my species."

His exquisite Sonnet "on his Blindness" is known to all; it breathes the spirit of unrepining Christian resignation, and the most elevated views of the Deity. Less known is another addressed to his friend Skinner, three years after his loss, in which he alludes to it with that consciousness of his own worth, which is perfectly compatible with the highest genius:—

——— "I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them, overplied
In liberty's defence, my noble task
Of which all Europe rings from side to side;
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask,
Content, though blind, had I no better guide."

Neither his activity nor his natural cheerfulness seems to have been affected by his loss of sight. By his resignation he plucked from it all its sting, and may almost be said to have converted the calamity into a blessing, and to have turned its inevitable consequences to the service of his mighty genius.

Repeated family afflictions, and the loss of a second and greatly beloved wife had pressed acutely on the great but sensitive mind of Milton, when the Restoration placed

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Charles II. on the throne of England, and Milton was compelled to lurk for a while under hiding. His friends were even driven to the ingenious expedient of getting up a mock funeral, and following his supposed remains to the grave, in order to stay the search for him, and secure his escape. He was arrested on his again appearing in public, but his name had not been inserted among the list of exceptions appended to the Bill of Indemnity, probably owing to his being believed to be already in his grave, and he was released after a time, on the payment of costly fees. Thenceforth he meddled no more with public affairs, but solaced his neglected retirement with the composition of his immortal poem. According to Aubrey, the Paradise Lost was begun two years before the restoration of the king, and finished about three years after that event. A considerable portion of it is believed to have been penned while he lay in concealment;—a striking proof of his composure and serenity of mind amid such dangers. To this he is believed to allude in the following passage which occurs in the Seventh Book:—

"More safe I sing with mortal voice; unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east. Still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revelers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou, who thee implores:
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream."

The concluding invocation acquires peculiar force when we think of the circumstances under which it was written,

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surrounded with the mad revelry of bacchanalian cavaliers, —heard, perchance, from his place of concealment,—and calmly anticipating the rude violence of his enemies, that might drag him from such employment to the dungeon and the scaffold.

Though Milton was allowed to withdraw into retirement, and was thenceforth visited only by the few who sympathized in his views of the rights and liberties of England, yet in one instance a striking tribute was paid to his great genius by the new monarch. Charles II., on his accession to the English throne, found himself surrounded by a host of greedy adventurers, reduced by sacrifices made in the royal cause, and still more by their own dissolute excesses. It was easy for him among such a retinue to find a hundred candidates for every vacant office, but not so easy to discover one fitted for any important duty. Under those circumstances, and conscious of the necessity of filling up the office of Latin Secretary with one who would maintain the credit of his foreign policy, he at length, in despair of discovering such a man among his own needy cavaliers, made offer of it to the blind republican, John Milton.

The offer could not be without its attractions to one reduced, in his old age and his peculiarly dependent condition, to such narrow means. But the government that offered it was stained with the blood of his old compatriots, and its principles were such as he had devoted the best years of his life to subvert. Its rejection cost him little thought. Urged on this occasion by his wife to accept an office that thus promised to restore him to affluence and rank, he replied, "Ah! my dear, you are like most other females, you would be a lady and ride in a coach; my aim is to live and die an honest man."

Notwithstanding this unwilling tribute to the master-spirit of his time, it need not excite our wonder that Milton was generally regarded with the most rancorous feel-

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ings by the Royalists, who rejoiced over his blindness and poverty, as signal tokens of the retributive vengeance of God. A curious story is related, which illustrates this in a very striking manner, as exhibited in the highest quarters. The Duke of York, afterwards James II., expressed one day to the king his brother, a great desire to see old Milton, of whom he had heard so much. The king replied that he had not the slightest objection to the duke's satisfying his curiosity; and accordingly, soon afterwards, James went privately to Milton's house, where, after an introduction, which explained to the old republican the rank of his guest, a free conversation ensued between these very dissimilar and discordant characters. In the course, however, of the conversation, the duke asked Milton whether he did not regard the loss of his eye-sight as a judgment inflicted on him for what he had written against the late king. Milton's reply was to this effect: "If your Highness thinks that the calamities which befall us here are indications of the wrath of Heaven, in what manner are we to account for the fate of the king your father? The displeasure of Heaven must, upon this supposition, have been much greater against him than me, for I have only lost my eyes, but he lost his head."

Much discomposed by this answer, the duke speedily took his leave. On his return to court, the first words which he spoke to the king were, "Brother, you are greatly to blame that you don't have that old rogue Milton hanged." "Why, what is the matter, James? Have you seen Milton?" "Yes," answered the duke, "I have seen him." "Well," said the king, "in what condition did you find him?" "Condition! why he is old and very poor." "Old and poor! Well, and he is blind, too, is he not?" "Yes, blind as a beetle." "Why, then," observed the king, "You are a fool, James, to have him hanged as a punishment: to hang him will be doing him a service; it will be taking him out of his miseries. No,

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if he is old, poor, and blind, he is miserable enough; in all conscience, let him live."

The narrative is singularly characteristic of all the parties engaged in it. The two royal brothers were equally destitute of principle, but Charles was so wedded to his pleasures, that he would sacrifice even enmity and revenge for their attainment, while James, with an equal contempt of virtue, was morose and malignant, and untiring in his hate. It was well for the honour of England, little as that owes to Charles, that he and not his brother then occupied the throne.

Milton died at the age of sixty-six. His closing years had been clouded by many privations, yet to one possessed of so great a mind, and such noble resources with which to beguile the darkness of his way, it is not needful that we should dwell with sympathetic lamentation on his bereavements. The opening passage of the third book of his great poem, wherein he contrasts the power and beauty of light with his own irreparable loss, has even excited admiration as well as interest from its touching allusions to himself:—

"———Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works to me expunged and rased,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

The life of Milton had nobly answered its great end

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The vigour of his life was devoted to his country. One of the most valuable faculties of nature had been sacrificed in the cause of its liberty, and worldly interests and even present fame had been ungrudgingly yielded for the same noble cause. Virtue and religion found in him an unfailing advocate. The cause of education employed one of the most vigorous efforts of his pen, and "when a damp fell round the path of Milton," he turned to that sublime picture of Divine majesty and mercy, which, as he himself anticipated, ere yet its flowing numbers were penned, "posterity will not willingly let die." Ere the first edition of his great poem was sold, he was numbered with the dead. His work was done; his high ambition attained; and he withdrew with the calm confidence and the sublime hopes of the Christian entering into "that rest that remaineth for the people of God." He was buried in the church of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, where a small slab indicates the spot where the dust of England's noble Poet reposes, resting in the sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality.

CHAPTER VII

CHATTERTON.

THE evidences of Poetic genius that have been selected for illustrating this portion of our subject have heretofore been taken from the mightiest examples of human intellect, directing matured powers towards the accomplishment of immortal works. From these, however, we shall now turn, to direct our attention to one or two of those striking examples of early genius whose brief existence leaves us to mourn the loss of productions accomplished in maturer years.

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Most readers are acquainted with Wordsworth's beautiful poem entitled RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE, and with the noble stanza in which he gives voice to his own troubled thoughts:—

> "I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
> The sleepless soul that perished in his pride;
> Of him who walked in glory and in joy,
> Following his plough along the mountain side;
> By our own spirits are we deified:
> We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
> But thereof come in the end despondency and madness."

Chatterton is one of the most remarkable, as well as the most melancholy, examples of early genius that the whole Poetic biography of genius affords, full as it is with striking instances of both. His father, who was a sub-chanter of Bristol Cathedral, and teacher of a free-school, died on the 7th of August, 1752, three months before the birth of his gifted son. He is described as having been a man of some talent and considerable shrewdness, but of violent temper and unsteady habits, so that his son probably suffered little loss of moral training from being born into the world an orphan. His mother appears to have been a quiet, uncomplaining woman, possessed of little education or natural abilities, yet with somewhat of the same honest pride and independence which was so remarkably exhibited by her son. She contrived to support herself and family by teaching a dame-school, but her circumstances were always greatly straitened.

"At the age of five years Chatterton was placed under the care of a Mr. Love, who succeeded to the office of schoolmaster on the death of his father; but such was his apparent dulness or incapacity, that, after exhausting the patience of his schoolmaster, he was sent back to his mother with the character of a stupid boy, and one who was absolutely incapable of receiving instruction. Chat-

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terton, however, is not the only instance of this kind: many of those whose names stand high in the various departments of science and literature, gave no intimation in the dawning of their days, of that splendour, which afterwards eclipsed the lesser light of some whose morning was full of promise.

On his removal from the Pyle Street school, his widowed mother, who was rendered extremely unhappy by the hopeless stupidity of her boy, commenced instructing him herself, but with as little success as Mr. Love, and she almost despaired of ever even teaching him his letters. Many were the uneasinesses that his singularities caused his mother, and until he was six years and a half old she thought him to be an absolute fool. But, on her one day showing him an old musical manuscript, in French, with illuminated capitals, to use her own words, *he fell in love with it.* From this manuscript he learned the alphabet, and he soon afterwards was able to read in an old black-lettered Bible. His progress was now as rapid as it had formerly been tardy. And we learn, from the authority just quoted, that 'at *seven* he visibly improved, to his mother's joy and surprise; and at *eight* years of age he was so eager for books, that he read from the moment he waked, which was early, until he went to bed, if they would let him.' He now began to borrow books of all his acquaintance; and he would frequently assure his mother and sister, that when he grew up he would repay them for their trouble in teaching him, promising them plenty of finery as a reward for their care."

The novel school-book with which Chatterton *fell in love*, and from which he was first induced to learn his alphabet, doubtless exercised a lasting influence on his mind. The illuminated initials of an antique musical MS. would impress the mind of almost any child with astonishment and delight; in him, there can be little doubt, it gave the first impulse to that passion for anti-

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quarian pursuits which so strangely influenced the wonderful productions of his genius.

On the 3rd of August, 1760, when not quite eight years of age, Chatterton was admitted into Colston's Free School, Bristol, an establishment somewhat resembling Christ's Church School, London, but altogether behind it in the system of education it afforded to the pupils; the boys being taught nothing but reading, writing, and arithmetic. "On his first entering the school he was very proud of his election. 'Here,' said he, exultingly, 'I shall get all the learning I want:' but the young enthusiast had not long been an inmate of the establishment before he became wearied and disgusted with the monotony of his scholastic duties, which were such as to qualify him for a trade; and asserted that 'he could not learn so much at school as he could at home, for they had not books enough there.'

After he had been at the school about two years, he began, by means of the small portion of pocket money allowed him by his mother, to hire books from a shop then kept by Mr. Goodal, nearly opposite the Cider-house Passage, in Broad Street; and Mrs. Newton, his sister, states, in a letter written by her on the authority of the usher of the school, that at this period he made rapid progress in arithmetic. Between his eleventh and twelfth years he wrote a catalogue of books he had read, to the number of seventy; history and divinity were the chief subjects; and he used to retire for the purpose of reading during the hours allotted for play.

The assistant-master of Colston's school at this time was one Thomas Phillips, who it appears, 'notwithstanding the disadvantage of a very confined education, possessed a taste for history and poetry; of the latter the magazines and other periodicals of that time furnish no very contemptible specimens.' The poetical attempts of Phillips excited a kind of literary emulation amongst the

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elder classes of the scholars, but Phillips, to the mortification of his opponent, always came off victorious. Chatterton in all these contentions took no part, appearing merely as an idle spectator, no ways interested in the business of the drama, apparently possessing neither inclination, nor indeed ability, for literary pursuits. At this time, however, there can be little doubt that he was preparing himself for higher and nobler achievements; not expending the knowledge he had already acquired in fruitless exertions, but storing it up, and adding thereto in the garner of his capacious mind, against a period when he might, like the Israelitish stripling, go forth and fearlessly encounter the Goliaths of literature. Owing to such pursuits, his spirits were very uneven, and his tastes and dispositions were widely different from those of youths of his own age. Instead of the thoughtless levity of childhood he possessed the pensiveness, gravity, and melancholy of maturer life. He was frequently so lost in contemplation, that for many days together he would say but very little, and that apparently by constraint. His intimates in the school were few, and those of the most serious cast.

It was, and still is, I believe, customary for the boys educated at Colston's school to take the post of door-keeper in rotation, the office continuing for the space of a week at a time in the occupation of one boy. Of course the lad in office had much leisure time during this period, and Chatterton, in the week he held the situation, composed several verses on the last day; these are not to be found. He also paraphrased the ninth chapter of Job, and some chapters in Isaiah. After he began to write Poetry his disposition changed in some measure; the gloom that had hung over him was partially dispelled, and he became somewhat cheerful. His sister also mentions having made him a present of a pocket-book, as a new-year's gift; he filled it at intervals with pieces

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of Poetry, and at the end of the year he presented it to her."

The productions of Chatterton, which form at once the most singular literary curiosities of the eighteenth century, and the most marvellous of his own wonderful writings, are what are styled the Rowleian Manuscripts. In order to account for their origin, as well as for the possession by the sub-chanter of Bristol's widow of an ancient illuminated MS. whereon to teach her son his letters, it is necessary that we should revert to some proceedings that took place at Bristol years before the birth of Chatterton. The beautiful old Church of St. Mary's, Redcliff, and its muniment room over the north porch, will ever form the fittest monuments of the *Boy of Bristol*, whatever memorials of stone or marble the citizens may erect as a token of their reverence for the genius that was permitted to pass away from them unappreciated and unknown, and to perish a lonely stranger amid the crowds of busy London. "It appears that over the north porch of Redcliff Church, which was rebuilt by Mr. William Canynge, an eminent merchant of Bristol, in the fifteenth century, and in the reign of Edward IV., there is a room in which were placed several large chests, one of which was especially known as *Mr. Canynge's cofre*, which, it is said, was secured by six keys, of which, two were intrusted to the minister and procurator of the church, and one to each of the churchwardens. About the year 1727, it was suspected that some title deeds and other valuable writings were contained in the cofre in question; by an order of the vestry the chest was forced open, in the presence of an attorney, all the keys having been accidentally lost: the other chests were also opened, and all the writings and deeds immediately relating to the church were removed, the other manuscripts being left as of no value. Chatterton's father used frequently to carry off large parcels of these parchments, and on one occa-

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sion, with the assistance of his boys, he filled a large basket with them. These he deposited in a cupboard in his school, and employed them for different purposes, such as the covering of books. Mr. Gibbs, the vicar of the parish, having presented the boys with twenty Bibles, Mr. Chatterton, in order to preserve them from injury, covered them with these old parchments. After his death, his widow, when she removed, carried the remainder to her own house. Mr. Smith, one of Chatterton's most intimate friends, gives the following account of the manner in which Chatterton pretended to discover the value of these manuscripts; the information was given to Dr. Glynn, and published by Mr. Bryant, in his Observations; it is as follows:—'Chatterton told him, Mr. S., about the time he first went to Lambert's, that he had them from a box which had belonged to his father; and his father had them from Redcliff Church. His father being dead, and these parchments in the possession of his mother, they for many years shared the common fate that old parchments usually do, that is, some were turned into threadpapers; some into patterns; some into dolls, and the like: in short, they were applied to all those vile and mean uses which waste writings are liable to be put to. He added, that the manner of their being discovered to be of value was this: when young Chatterton was first articled to Mr. Lambert, he used frequently to come home to his mother by way of a short visit. There one day his eye was caught by one of these threadpapers; he found not only the writing to be very old, the characters very different from common characters, but the subject therein treated was different from common subjects. Being naturally of an inquisitive and curious turn, he was very much struck with these appearances; and, as one would expect, began to question his mother what those threadpapers were; how she got them; and from whence they came. Upon farther inquiry he was led to a disco-

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very of all the parchments which remained, and of what value they were.' Mr. Smith states that Chatterton was very fond of walking in the fields, and particularly in Redcliff meadows, and of talking about these manuscripts, which he asserted to consist of poetical and other compositions by Mr. Canynge, and an individual, who existed alone in the prolific imagination of Chatterton, described as a monk, and a particular friend of the builder of Redcliff Church, named Thomas Rowley."

This good priest, Thomas Rowley, who was in reality a creation of the boy's own fancy, was represented by him as a Poet who had delighted to solace his hours of leisure and reflection by the composition of poems on a variety of subjects, which he professed to find among the old parchments brought by his father from the muniment-chest of Redcliff Church.

The ingenious and strange fancy of writing a series of poems as the work of a monk of the fifteenth century, appears to have entered the mind of this singular genius at an age so early as would have rendered it altogether inconceivable, were not the evidence on which the account is founded of the most unquestionable nature. There seems little reason to doubt that Chatterton contemplated the production of the Rowley manuscripts before he entered Colston's school, although he was then aged only seven years and nine months, and that the carrying out of his project, and the concocting of the manuscripts on the old parchments he found in his mother's house, in imitation of the handwriting and the general style of the fifteenth century, formed the chief amusement of his holidays during the time he was a pupil at that school. The only holidays which the blue-coat boys of Colston's school ever had were on saints' days and on Saturday afternoons; on these occasions Chatterton always spent the time allowed him at home, generally in the room which he designated his own: there he frequently remained

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without meals for many hours, returning from it with face and hands completely begrimmed. In this room he had a pounce bag of charcoal, a great nub of ochre, and a bottle of black-lead powder; and the table was covered with letters, papers, and parchments. Sometimes, however, he would write on the seat of the school-room window, which was high, and to accomplish which he was obliged to stand on a chair. If any of his mother's pupils interrupted him, he would get down from it in great anger, and strike them to make them quiet. Occasionally his mother would take the children into an upper room, when he was thus engaged, that he might not be disturbed.

The ochre, charcoal, and other materials collected in his little room, were for the purpose of giving to his manuscripts the appearance of age, and when it is considered that these ingenious productions of this uneducated child led to a controversy among some of the most acute scholars and critics of the age, that lasted for years, and left many after all with faith in their genuineness and antiquity, no other evidence can be required to show that Chatterton's history affords one of the most remarkable examples of early genius on record.

Poor, hapless child of genius! here he was with a mind matured in faculty beyond that of the great majority of men, while he had scarcely passed the years of infancy. But he found no wise and prudent guide to teach him the right use of his great faculties, and to assist or direct him in choosing out a path for their fit application. The world was all a blank before him, and the poor child was left, with his strange, manly spirit of proud independence and self-reliance, to hew out a way for himself as he best might, or perish in the attempt. No more sad and mournful spectacle was witnessed in all that eighteenth century than the brief life of Chatterton discloses. His poor mother loved her singular boy with all a mother's

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love; she taught, him, too, all she could, when others had given up the task of his instruction as hopeless. But he was beyond her teaching before he had reached his seventh year, and then nothing better awaited the ardent thirst of his great mind for knowledge and instruction but the dull and circumscribed routine of Colston's school, with its stinted pittance of the mere rudiments and alphabet of learning. We look in vain, too, for any moral teacher to direct the wayward boy to that highest of all knowledge, which passes human understanding, and which would have proved a guide of such inestimable value to him. Had the ardent young mind been turned at that period to the acquirement of such knowledge as thousands of institutions in England afford;—had the Bristol Charity School been such another as the Christ's Church School of London, where only some twenty years later Coleridge and Lamb climbed together the arduous steep—

> Where Fame's proud temple shines afar;

had it only been so, how different might have been the fate of the marvellous boy. How might the world have rejoiced in his great strength, and smiled at the wonderful fictions of his boyhood! It was not, however, so to be. A strange, brief, melancholy career was that of the boy, terminating as in the blackness of night;—and the world awoke, too late, to an appreciation of that mighty genius it had suffered to perish in the very dawn of its powers. The only one he seems to have met with at all likely to kindle any sympathy in his mind was Thomas Phillips, the assistant master in Colston's school, whose taste for Poetry has been already referred to. To him the earliest concocted manuscript—that of *Elenoure and Juga*, it is believed—was shown, and he manifested not only perfect faith in it, but such enthusiastic zeal and anxiety to decipher it, as was well calculated to stimulate the boy to pursue the singular course he had chosen.

At this time he had received some little notice from

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a Mr. Burgum, a pewterer of Bristol, and he took the strangest means of gratifying him, by playing on his inordinate vanity and conceit. Both he and his partner, Mr. Calcott, appear to have been vain purse-proud men, and both were made the butts of Chatterton's sly satire. The latter indulged his vanity on the occasion of the opening of Bristol Bridge, in 1767, by obtaining the privilege of being the first to pass over it on horseback and pay toll, which was accordingly charged *five guineas*,—a fact alluded to in one of Chatterton's satires, which seems to have equally gratified the pewterer of Bristol as affording an additional chance of fame. Mr. Burgum had risen to wealth from a very humble origin, and Chatterton soon discovered where his weakness lay. Mr. Thistlethwaite remarks of him, in writing to Dean Milles: "He had often noticed Chatterton, as an acute blue-coat boy, fond of books, and had occasionally given him small sums of money. Mr. Burgum was a vain man, credulous, and fond of notoriety; of whose mind Chatterton had, no doubt, taken an admeasurement, and, as proof of his discernment, gravely practised on him the deception most likely to succeed with one who longed for the distinction of an illustrious and ancient descent.

One Saturday afternoon, during his holiday hours, Chatterton called on Mr. Burgum, (whose business was then carried on in the house now occupied by Messrs. Saunders, Bristol Bridge,) in the school dress, and with great solemnity told him that he had made a discovery!

What?' said Mr. Burgum eagerly. 'Why,' replied the young bard, 'that you are related, in lineal descent, to some of the first nobles of the land.' 'I did not know it, Tom,' was Mr. Burgum's reply. 'Perhaps not,' rejoined Chatterton; 'but amongst the treasures I have obtained from Redcliff Church room, I have found *your* pedigree, clearly traced from a very remote period.' On Mr. Burgum's expressing an urgent desire to see so extraor-

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dinary a document, Chatterton promised to transcribe the pedigree from the original manuscripts. Having no pence to spare, Chatterton had not been able to procure a book to copy it in, but, recollecting that he had one half written through, he appropriated it to the purpose. The writing alluded to was portions of ancient poems, translated from the originals, with the following title: 'Poems by Thomas Rowley, priest of St. John's, in the city of Bristol, containing the Tournament and Interlude; and a piece by Cannynge, called the Gouler's (Usurer's) Requiem.'

A few days after his promise to Mr. Burgum, he presented him with the book alluded to, to which was prefixed the De Burgham arms, laboriously painted on parchment, and which bore all the appearance of an ancient document. It may be important to state, that it is precisely the same *kind* of parchment as that on which all the presumed originals of Rowley are written; now placed in the British Museum. The title of the book is, 'An account of the Family of the De Burghams, from the Norman Conquest to this time; collected from Original Records, Tournament Rolls, and the Heralds of March and Garter Records, by T. Chatterton.' Chatterton stated that the documents in Redcliff Church extended only to a certain period, and that he had been obliged to fill up the hiatus by a reference to other sources.

We may conceive the exultation of Mr. Burgum when he first perused this singular document, on finding that he was descended from Simon de Leyncte Lyze, alias Lenliz, in the reign of William the Conqueror, who married Matilda, daughter of Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland, Northampton, and Huntingdon, of Burgham Castle, in Northumberland. Not doubting the validity of the record, in which his own honours were so deeply implicated, he presented the poor blue-coat boy, who had been so

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fortunate in *finding* so much, and so assiduous in his endeavours to collect the remainder, with the plebeian remuneration of *five shillings*. Five shillings, however, was perhaps more by half-a-crown than poor Chatterton had expected to receive; and observing that Mr. Burgum thought it unnecessary to question him very minutely as to the miraculous manner in which this precious document was preserved for so many ages, amid the revolution of states and the decay of empires, he, a fortnight afterwards, presented the pewterer with a second book, being a supplement to the pedigree, bearing the following title: 'Continuation of the Account of the Family of the De Burghams, from the Norman Conquest to this time, by T. Chatterton.'

In this second part, to flatter his Mæcenas, as well as to remove suspicion, Chatterton introduced one of the identical poems which he said he had found in the muniment room, in the true old English, with a modernization by himself. But the singularity was augmented by its being found that a *genuine* old poem, entitled 'the Romaunte of the Cnyghte' was absolutely written by John De Burgham, one of Mr. Burgum's own ancestors! who was, according to Chatterton, 'the greatest ornament of his age;' and whom he introduces in the following familiar way: 'To give you (Mr. Burgum) an idea of the poetry of the age, take the following piece, wrote about 1320;' and then follows the quaint poem by John De Bergham."

What idea Mr. Burgum formed of *the poetry of the age*, does not appear, but he was no doubt greatly charmed with the *Romaunte* of his illustrious ancestor. Chatterton modernized it for behoof of the worthy pewterer, "and so delighted was he with the idea of his being descended from one of the sons of Parnassus, that he presented his informant with a second five shillings! With the same grave shrewdness and wit he gratified the vanity of a worthy breeches-maker of Salisbury, named Stevens,

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by proving his lineal descent from Fitz Stephen, grandson of the venerable Od, Earl of Blois, and Lord of Holderness, who flourished about the year 1095!"

The De Bergham pedigree is a production altogether wonderful as the work of a boy. It is characterized by an amount of ingenuity, and by a completeness and consistency which could hardly fail to deceive any one who did not vigorously investigate its authorities. Mr. Cottle ascertained long afterwards that the worthy pewterer went to London and submitted it to the officials of the Herald's College, not, as he said, with a view to their discussing its merits or authenticity, which were altogether beyond being challenged, but merely that they might affix thereto their corroborative attestation. "The affair, however, was not so soon to be settled. The officers of the institution examined this authentic pedigree with the closest attention; this very pedigree, which was founded, professedly, on the records of March and Garter, and yet the very Heralds of March and Garter unspeakably surprised and mortified the half-ennobled Mr. Burgum, by informing him that the whole was a hoax, by that prodigy of genius the Bristol boy, Thomas Chatterton."

This whole affair curiously illustrates the tendency of Chatterton's mind to such antiquarian fictions; it must, moreover, be regarded as evidence of that indifference to the unvarying obligations to truth which must ever be held paramount in a well-regulated mind. Mr. Burgum was too ready to place implicit faith in anything that tended to the supposed honour and glory of his name and lineage, to be inclined to trouble the ingenious humorist with any very searching investigation as to the source from whence such unexpected fame and nobility were derived. It was very different, however, with the Rowley MSS. So ingenious a forgery, constructed with so much talent, was certain, if it attracted attention at

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all, to be subjected to the most searching investigation, and this Chatterton met, when necessary, with the most pertinacious adherence to his original account, of their having been recovered among the parchments found in the muniment chest of Redcliff Church. Long after the poor wayward child of genius was laid in his pauper grave, industrious controversialists were accumulating rubbish-heaps of evidence in the Rowley controversy, and proving or disproving the existence of the *good priest*, the creation of that strange boy's fancy; nay, we are not sure that old Rowley has not some faithful adherents still, who place all their trust in the old worm-eaten chest, and believe that Chatterton did no more than rescue these literary treasures from his mother's lumber room!

Chatterton in reality never was a boy. We find him a child, retaining the infantine passiveness and slumber of the intellectual faculties much longer than is usually the case, and then suddenly he seems a man in thought and purpose; not indeed free from many of those child-like traits which men of genius frequently retain through life, uncorrupted by the grovelling and mercenary teaching of worldly selfishness, but with nothing of the boy about him,—nothing apparently either of boyhood's virtues or faults.

The ingenious turn for literary fraud which we have already remarked upon as an aberration from that strict regard to truth which is exhibited by a virtuous and well-regulated mind, was in him confined in the most singular manner to this one phase. It was reserved, as it were, as one of his literary and antiquarian tools, which he took up and laid down in his humble study. He was described by his sister, and all who knew him intimately, as a strict lover of truth, whose veracity could be depended upon from his earliest years. Yet he did not hesitate, when he thought it necessary for the maintenance

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of his secret, to persist in his early fiction as to the discovery of the Rowley manuscripts, and to maintain this by the most obstinate ingenuity of falsehood.

Poor boy! there is not the slightest evidence to show that he received any moral instruction adequate to the control of so gigantic an intellect. The Church Catechism and other formularies, no doubt, formed part of the daily course of Colston's school, which so speedily changed his sanguine anticipations of high intellectual enjoyment into apathy and disgust. How would his noble mind have expanded under the influence of Christianity, inculcated in all its loveliness and power; and how completely would it have sufficed to counterbalance that haughty and indomitable pride which concentrated alike the virtues and the vices of his strangely constituted mind into one overruling power, until it triumphed over conscience and reason, and the marvellous boy "perished in his pride!"

The age in which he lived was unpropitious; the circumstances that environed him far more so. Scepticism was the religion of the age, and was early received with favour into his mind; no glimpse appears in all the strange vicissitudes of his brief career indicating that he ever came in contact with one actuated by vital religion, to show him its worth, or seek to infuse its influence into his wayward mind. He seems left, like the rudderless bark in the tempest, resistlessly sweeping onward to his fate.

Chatterton left Colston's school when in his fifteenth year. These important years of his life had been wasted in the dull routine of a charity school, learning the merest rudiments of knowledge, except in as far as the ardent boy became his own teacher. In the month of July 1767, he was transferred to a new but scarcely less congenial sphere. "On the same day that he left school he was bound apprentice to Mr. John Lambert, attorney at Bristol, for the term of seven years, to learn the art and

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mysteries of a scrivener. How far Chatterton's inclinations were consulted, with regard to this step, does not appear to have been stated, and it is most probable, from after-circumstances, and from the fact of the necessitous situation of his mother at the time, that he was merely a passive agent. On leaving the school, according to the usual custom, ten pounds were paid for him to Mr Lambert. The indentures of his apprenticeship are now deposited in the Bristol Institution; from them it appears that Chatterton was to be found by Lambert in meat, drink, clothing, and lodging, and, by a special agreement, his mother was to wash and mend for him.

Mr. Lambert's house was situated at some distance from the office, and Chatterton was required to be at the latter place by eight o'clock in the morning, where, with the exception of an hour allowed him for dinner, he remained the whole of the day, or until eight o'clock in the evening; after which time he was allowed two hours to go where he chose. At ten he was always required to be at Mr. Lambert's house. The treatment he experienced from Mr. Lambert, who was incapable of appreciating the talents of his apprentice, seems to have been a source of great dissatisfaction to him. He was obliged to sleep in the same room with the foot-boy, and take his meals with the servants. This degradation, to one possessing such pride as Chatterton, must have been mortifying in the highest degree. 'We saw him,' says his sister, 'most evenings before nine, and he would, in general, stay to the limits of his time, which was ten. He was seldom two evenings together without seeing us. The time of his return to Mr. Lambert's on Sunday evenings was eight o'clock; and if by chance he ever stayed with his mother over the time specified, he would say, with a sigh, 'Well, I must go, I suppose, to be reproved now.'

From all that can be ascertained, Chatterton had the

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greatest contempt both for his master and for the profession with which he was connected; yet Mr. Lambert bears honourable testimony to his conduct whilst he was in his service. His attendance on his stated duties was most regular, never having, but on one occasion, absented himself from his master's service, and then he had obtained leave to spend the evening with his mother and some friends.

The business transacted by Mr. Lambert was but little, and Chatterton was scarcely ever occupied more than two hours a day on his master's affairs, and as Mr. Lambert was seldom there, Chatterton had a great deal of time to himself, which he employed in writing for the periodicals of the day. Mr. Lambert was much averse to his thus employing himself; at times he used him very harshly in consequence, and, according to Chatterton's own expression, 'he was continually insulting him and making his life miserable,' taking every opportunity to vex, cross, and mortify him; and if by chance at any time he found on his desk any scrap of poetry, he would instantly tear it to pieces, and scattering it abroad, say, '*There is your stuff*,' always speaking contemptuously of the lad and his compositions. Mrs. Edkins frequently gave Chatterton money to buy paper for his own use; but Mr. Lambert always destroyed any manuscripts of Chatterton he could find, because not written on subjects appertaining to the law; sometimes he would throw them at him with great brutality. This conduct of Lambert's, no doubt, was a source of great mortification to the young enthusiast, for he used to regret these ravages, not so much for the loss of occasional letters written to friends, for these, he said, he could rewrite, but his *poetical* compositions were for ever lost."

Mr. Lambert has perhaps been more blamed after all than in fair justice he should. We have rather to mourn the circumstances that placed poor Chatterton with one

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to whom his occupation could not fail to appear altogether objectionable and wasteful of time. What could he or any other Bristol scrivener think of Rowley manuscripts, De Burgham pedigrees, and the like? Yet at the same time it must be borne in remembrance that the dissatisfaction which Chatterton's poetical and antiquarian recreations occasioned to the dull attorney, led him to charge the ingenious boy with a degree of idleness and neglect of his profession which it is quite evident there was no fair grounds of offence to justify. "A curious remark," says his latest biographer, Mr. Dix, "was once made by Lambert to Mrs. Chatterton on her asking if her son was a good apprentice? He replied that he was, but there was no keeping boys from *idleness;* this, at least, could not be laid to his account, and has about as much foundation in truth as many other of the faults with which he has been charged. It appears that the continued ill-usage he received made him thoroughly dislike his employment, and he used every endeavour to thwart his master, that he might be induced to emancipate him from a state which he deemed little better than slavery. His stated employment, when Mr. Lambert was absent, and when no other business interfered, was to copy precedents, a book of which, containing three hundred and forty-four large folio pages, closely written by Chatterton, while he remained in the office, is still extant, as well as another of about thirty pages. The office library contained but a few law books, and an old edition of Camden's Britannia, from which work, no doubt, he borrowed much of his intelligence. He also obtained from Mr. Green, bookseller of Bristol, Speight's Chaucer, and from its glossary compiled one for his own use, in two parts; the first contained old words, with the modern English; the second, the modern English with the old words. It enabled him to turn modern English into old, as an English and Latin dictionary enables the student to turn

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English into Latin." Here therefore we find him systematically preparing the materials for the Rowley Poems.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANTIQUARIAN INVENTIONS.

It was not poetry alone, or even chiefly, that most strongly engaged the attention of Chatterton, or excited the indignation of his master, while he was in Mr. Lambert's office. Antiquarian pursuits had now taken a strong hold of his mind, and these, followed up with the zeal with which he entered on them, were even more seductive than a devotion to the muses, and much more calculated to give him a distaste for the ordinary dull routine of the office. Antiquarianism was with him a thing altogether different from the dilettante spirit of *nic-nacket collectors*, such as Horace Walpole, to whom the young antiquarian soon after made a vain appeal. It is evident that he recalled the past to his own mind with a vividness and power that enabled him, as it were, to live in it. The description of his manner, as furnished by one of his companions at this period, conveys the most lively idea of this. "'Come,' he would say, 'you and I will take a walk in the meadow. I have got the cleverest thing for you that ever was; it is worth half-a-crown merely to have a sight of it, and to hear me read it to you.' When we were arrived at the place proposed, he would produce his parchment, show it and read it to me. There was one spot in particular, full in view of the church, in which he always seemed to take a peculiar delight. He would frequently lay himself down, fix his eyes upon the church; and seem as if he were in a kind of ecstacy or trance. Then, on a sudden and abruptly,

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he would tell me, 'that steeple was burnt down by lightning; that was the place where they formerly acted plays,' (meaning, if I remember right, what is now called the Parade;) I recollect very assuredly that he had a parchment in his hand at the very time when he gave me this description, but whether he read this history out of that parchment I am not certain."

Chatterton had been about fifteen months in Mr. Lambert's office when the new bridge at Bristol was finished, some time in the month of September 1768, and in the following month, there appeared in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, a curious account of the ceremonies observed by the Friars, at the opening of the old structure. This was the first of that series of strange literary inventions that now excite our wonder and admiration. This account of the ancient ceremonial, "as may readily be imagined, excited considerable curiosity among the literati of Bristol. It evinces strong inventive powers, and an uncommon knowledge of ancient customs; and is so specific, appropriate, and characteristic, that, when we remember it was produced by a boy not yet sixteen, it must be regarded as a real wonder.

The attention of Bristol was now awakened, and many of the citizens applied to Mr. Farley for a sight of the original and the name of the transcriber. Mr. F., however, only knew that it had been brought to his office by a stranger; but some time after Chatterton presenting another piece for insertion in the same paper, suspicion attached itself to him with regard to the authorship of the ancient manuscript. The youth was at first very unwilling to discover whence he had the original. To the threats of those who treated him (agreeably to his age and appearance) as a child, he returned nothing but haughtiness and a refusal to give any account: but what threats failed to do, milder usage and promises of patronage effected. His first account was, that he was em-

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ployed to transcribe the contents of certain ancient manuscripts by a gentleman, who had also engaged him to furnish complimentary verses, inscribed to a lady with whom that gentleman was in love. This account not being deemed satisfactory, he was further questioned, and, at last, he stated that he had received the manuscript of 'the Fryars passing over the Old Bridge,' with many other ancient manuscripts, from his father, who had found them in an old chest in the muniment room, on the north side of Redcliff Church."

The Rowley Manuscripts followed after a time, and were speedily made the subject of discussion and controversy among the smaller circle to whom they were made known. The object that their young author had in view in thus palming off his own wondrous productions on the world as the work of a monk that had lain forgotten for centuries in his grave has been frequently discussed by various writers. One biographer, for example, remarks:— "Chatterton *knew* that if he had introduced his Poetry to the world with his own name attached, it would not have, *at once*, attracted such attention, as if given out to be the newly-discovered production of the fifteenth century. He knew that by making such a startling assertion, public notice would immediately be directed towards him, as their discoverer; and although the compositions were such as would have done honour to any age, yet he preferred present fame, in the person of Rowley, to the remote possibility of his own name being numbered amongst the

> 'Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
> Of love and truth, by their immortal lays.'

The borrowed name of Rowley gave *consequence* to the borrower, Chatterton. Had he been a youth of common attainments, in all probability the poems of the monk had never been heard of."

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But all this proceeds on the supposition that Chatterton was like other boys of fifteen, or like other men of any age, instead of which he was a youth altogether different from any person we know of; with a genius unmatched probably by any man of that age, and influenced by motives and feelings which it would be folly to test by those that actuate the great class of mankind. The very ambition thus ascribed to a boy of fifteen is such as no boy of that age ever exhibited before, and the secrecy and firmness, as well as the consistency of purpose with which he adhered to his first thought, surpasses the power of most men in like circumstances. Some parallel may be found in the cases of Macpherson, with his Ossian, and Ireland, with his Shakspere Tragedies. Yet both were men, and had enjoyed the advantages of education; how immeasurably do they fall behind the poor Bristol boy!

Another opportunity now occurred for the exercise of the young antiquarian's inventive faculty. Mr. Barrett, a surgeon of Bristol, a man of considerable learning, and a decided turn for antiquarian pursuits, was informed of the curious discovery of manuscripts in the old Church. The pretended originals were shown to him by some of his friends who "were on the alert, to pick up every scrap of information in reference to his History of Bristol. Mr. Barrett suggested to Chatterton the propriety of his diligently examining all the Rowley papers, with great care, for the purpose of discovering whether they contained any particulars respecting the ancient city of Bristol. The young Poet soon discovered that a mine was now opened, which he might work with considerable advantage; true, the subject of the communications was somewhat different, but, as has been well observed, 'Chatterton possessed an anvil of all work, and with the same ease could sharpen a needle or mould a colossus.'

Soon after Mr. Barrett's intimation to Chatterton, the latter one day appeared before the historian of Bristol,

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in 'breathless haste,' exclaiming, like the philosopher of old, 'I have found it;' and placed in Mr. Barrett's hands, two or three notices, in his own hand-writing, which he declared were copied faithfully from the originals: these related to a few of the ancient Bristol churches. The credulous historian received them in the full belief that they were veritable documents, and considered them as wholly above suspicion. Chatterton, pleased with his success, promised to make a farther search, and it was not long before he presented Mr. Barrett with many curious particulars relating to the old Castle, and also, to *every* church and chapel in Bristol. These accounts, unsupported by either document or tradition, were published in Barrett's History of Bristol, (a work otherwise valuable,) as from the pen of 'Thomas Rowley, the gode prieste,' from behind whose cowl the pretended young transcriber smiled at the dupe of his ingenuity.

Chatterton, whose researches were never confined to one subject alone, borrowed from Mr. Barrett several works on medicine; and, by his request, Barrett also gave him some instructions in surgery. In a letter from Mr. Thistlethwaite, a fellow-pupil at Colston's school, to the author of 'Love and Madness,' he says, 'in the course of the years 1768 and 1769, wherein I frequently saw and conversed with Chatterton; the eccentricity of his mind, and the versatility of his disposition seemed to have been singularly displayed. One day he might be found busily employed in the study of heraldry and English antiquities, both of which are numbered among his most favoured pursuits; the next discovered him deeply engaged, confounded, and perplexed, amidst the subtilties of metaphysical disquisition, or lost and bewildered in the abstruse labyrinth of mathematical researches; and these in an instant again neglected and thrown aside, to make room for astronomy and music, of both which sciences his

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knowledge was entirely confined to theory. Even physic was not without a charm to allure his imagination, and he would talk of Galen, Hippocrates, and Paracelsus, with all the confidence and familiarity of a modern empirick.'"

At a later period, and shortly before Chatterton's departure for London, he thus speaks of Mr. Barrett, in writing to a friend:—"In this city my principal acquaintance is Mr. Barrett, now writing, at a vast expense, an ancient and modern History of Bristol; a task more difficult than the cleansing the Augean stable. Many have attempted, but none succeeded in it; yet will this work, when finished, please not only my fellow-citizens, but all the world."

Chatterton now felt more than ever the irksomeness of his uncongenial occupation, and strove to free himself from it by means of the productions of his muse. He sent to Mr. Dodsley a transcript of the Tragedy of Ælla, and, disappointed in the hope of his acceptance of it for publication, the sanguine boy persuaded himself that one of kindred tastes would not fail to exhibit a more generous sympathy in his pursuits. The following are the remarks of Mr. Dix on this step. "Although disappointed in his application to Mr. Dodsley, Chatterton, conscious of the superiority of his productions, determined to make another effort to disenthral himself from his present pursuits, and procure some situation where he might pursue, without interruption, the bent of his genius. It has been asserted that Chatterton, at this period, felt a secret longing for the patronage of the great; never was statement more untrue! He despised rank for its own sake; he was not one of that class of beings who would bow to his fellow man, because he owned a title or boasted a long line of ancestry. These are things only prized by those who know not rightly how to value 'the mind, the standard of the man.' Chatterton despised such adventitious aids, or only used them as steps in the

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ladder of his ambition; nor would he, though poor, bear in silence 'the proud man's contumely.' "

Horace Walpole was at this time engaged in some antiquarian researches, and Chatterton forwarded to him a letter, enclosing a manuscript likely to interest the author of "Anecdotes of Painting." To this Chatterton received so gracious a reply, that he forwarded a second communication, in which "he frankly stated his circumstances; that he was only sixteen years of age, and the son of a poor widow, who supported him with great difficulty; that he was apprenticed to an attorney, but had a taste for more elegant studies, and expressed a wish that Mr. Walpole would assist him with his interest in emerging out of so dull a profession, by procuring him some place in which he could pursue his natural bent; and he affirmed that great treasures of ancient Poetry had been discovered in his native city.

On the receipt of this letter, Mr. Walpole wrote to a relative at Bath, to inquire into the situation and character of Chatterton: the answer was corroborative of Chatterton's description of his situation. In the meantime he had communicated the specimens of the poems he had received to Mr. Gray and Mr. Mason, 'who at once pronounced them forgeries, and declared there was no symptom in them of their being the productions of near so distant an age; the language and metres being totally unlike anything ancient.'

Now came the change: the man, or rather, Horace Walpole, for that is his *proper* name, who had expressed himself as '*singularly obliged;*' who gave a thousand thanks for the 'curious letter;' who stated its contents as 'very valuable and full of information;' who declared, that instead of correcting the writer of that letter, he, the writer, was 'far more able to correct him;' and who complimented poor Chatterton on his 'learned notes;' and spoke of the Abbot John's verses as being 'wonderful

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for their harmony and spirit;' this Horace Walpole, (when his correspondent, with hopes engendered in his breast by the more than favourable reception of his letters, opened his circumstances to him, never doubting but that he should find a generous patron,) returned the poor author but cold approbation of his compositions; being unable, according to his own account, to help admiring the spirit of poetry which animated them. Walpole, of all men alive, had the least reason to be offended at the literary imposition attempted to be practised upon him.

'Who wrote Otranto?'

Exclaimed the poor bard, in the bitterness of his disappointment. But Mr. Walpole, who had himself attempted to deceive the world, could not bear that one so humble as Chatterton should deceive *him*. Macpherson's Ossian, too, was fresh in his memory. Before he behaved so harshly to Chatterton, Mr. Walpole would have done well to have reperused his own preface to the first edition of 'The Castle of Otranto,' the production of his *riper* years, in which he solemnly asserts that it was found in the 'library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England, and was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529.' In the second edition, the honourable author 'flatters himself he shall appear *excusable* for having offered his work to the world under the borrowed personage of a translator.' Thus after giving, by his respectable example,' a sanction to literary deception, he unblushingly and heartlessly asserts, in his 'Vindication,' that 'all of the house of forgery are relations; and that, though it be just to Chatterton's memory to say his poverty never made him claim kindred with the richest or more enriching branches, yet that his ingenuity in counterfeiting styles, and, I believe, hands, might easily have led him to those more facile imitations of prose, promissory notes.' 'Oh! ye,' wrote the late lamented Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in reference to this remark,

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'Oh! ye who honour the name of *man*, rejoice that this Walpole is called a *lord*.'

The following remarks on this subject are so excellent, that I cannot refrain from quoting them; they are from the pen of a gentleman to whom the literary world is indebted for much of the information concerning Chatterton. 'Horace Walpole,' he says, 'had *no right* to feel very indignant at a literary forgery, after the deception he practised on the public, in affirming that his 'Castle of Otranto' was a translation from the Italian. He expressly admits that no doubt rested on his mind that Rowley was a fictitious character, and that all Chatterton's communications were spurious. He must have asked himself, by whom then *were* they written? embodying a mass of ingenuity and excellence which, in the first place, had extorted from him the highest encomiums! He must have known that the whole was written by that 'marvellous boy,' who now stood before him as a humble dependant, and who had thus given evidence of a genius susceptible of unlimited attainments! What was now the conduct of Horace Walpole, the man who could fly to Tunbridge Wells, or hurry down to Bath, to meet a favourite party? What was his procedure at the period when a noble spirit would have almost rushed to administer both solace and relief to a poor boy of sixteen, who could not then be contemplated without wonder, and within whose reach, had he met with moderate encouragement, lay all that man was capable of attaining!

A slight effort, at this time, on the part of Horace Walpole, might have saved from destruction Thomas Chatterton. That he should have suffered so fair an occasion to pass for ever by, will associate no *blessings* with his name; whilst in every generous breast it will awaken keen but unavailing regrets, that the appeals of this fine spirit should not have been made to one endued with the best sympathies of our nature. and who could foster

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and recognise genius, even under the uncourtly garb of poverty.'

Chatterton constantly affirmed to Mr. Catcott that Horace Walpole *despised* him, from the time he made known to him his indigent circumstances, and this assertion appears to be founded on truth and justice. From the moment this intelligence reached him, the admiration, once so ardent, suddenly ceased, and that on an occasion when new admiration ought to have been excited, and respect unspeakably augmented; instead of which he insulted the high-minded bard of Bristol, by forwarding, instead of his former deferential epistles, as cold, phlegmatic a letter of common-place advice, (considering the occasion,) as ever issued from hard-hearted dulness."

Walpole was indeed a frivolous and heartless aristocrat, with about as little of the genuine enthusiasm of the antiquary as of the benevolence of a feeling heart. He did indeed make a defence of himself, not without some plausibility, but in which offended pride at his own ignorance of the true source of the pretended *antiques* seems the true source of the only feeling he assumed, while in the harshest spirit of misconstruction he remarks—"I have already said, that I should have been blameable to his mother and society if I had seduced an apprentice from his master to marry him to the nine muses: and I should have encouraged a propensity to forgery, which is not the talent most wanting culture in the present age. All of the house of forgery are relations; and though it is just to Chatterton's memory to say that his poverty never made him claim kindred with the richest, or most enriching branches, yet his ingenuity in counterfeiting styles, and, I believe, hands, might easily have led him to those more facile imitations of prose, promissory notes. Yet it does not appear to my knowledge that his honesty in that respect was ever perverted. He made no scruple of extending the circulation of literary credit, and of bam-

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boozling the misers of Saxon riches; but he never attempted to defraud, cheat, rob, unpoetically."

This is in character with the man who remarked in private, with the same heartlessness, when speaking of the poor boy whom he thus scorned, "*that singing birds should not be too well fed.*" The correspondence was conducted by Chatterton with great dignity, though this was little appreciated by Walpole. Chatterton had demanded the return of his manuscripts, and this his aristocratic correspondent discourteously neglected. He was preparing for a journey to Paris when the letter reached him. It accordingly lay unanswered for above six weeks, and Walpole on his return found a letter awaiting him from the poor boy whose hopes had been momentarily raised by his first reply. The letter of Chatterton is described by Walpole in his defence of himself as *singularly impertinent.* The reader will probably form a very different opinion of it. It was as follows:—

"SIR,—I cannot reconcile your behaviour with the notions I once entertained of you. I think myself injured, Sir; and did you not know my circumstances, you would not dare to treat me thus. I have sent twice for a copy of the manuscripts:—no answer from you. An explanation or excuse for your silence would oblige

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

July 24th."

To this Walpole returned no other answer than merely enclosing the manuscripts in a *blank cover.* The following lines found among Chatterton's papers, though a mere fragment, convey some idea of the feelings which he experienced at such an insult.

TO HORACE WALPOLE.

"Walpole, I thought not I should ever see
So mean a heart as thine has proved to be.

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Thou who in luxury nurs'd behold'st, with scorn,
The boy, who, friendless, fatherless, forlorn,
Asks thy high favour—thou may'st call me cheat.
Say. did'st thou never practise such deceit?
Who wrote Otranto? but I will not chide;
Scorn I'll repay with scorn—and pride with pride;—
Still, Walpole, still thy prosy chapters write,
And twaddling letters to some fair indite;
Laud *all* above thee, fawn and cringe to those
Who for thy fame were better friends than foes;
Still spurn the incautious fool who dares-

. . .

Had I the gifts of wealth and luxury shared,
Not poor and mean, Walpole! thou had'st not dared
Thus to insult. But I shall live and stand
By Rowley's side, when thou art dead ———"

It was indeed the shipwreck of many bright dreams. It was an insight into the heartless nature of the world, such as all the genius and strange knowledge of the sanguine boy had never taught him. But we shall revert again to the correspondence with Horace Walpole, when we have seen somewhat of the consequences that ensued from their brief intercourse. Chatterton employed, meanwhile, such leisure as he could snatch while in Mr. Lambert's employment, in writing Poems, political letters, and other equally extraordinary productions for a boy of sixteen, and most of which appeared in the public journals either of Bristol or London. His political letters are addressed to the most eminent men of the time, such as the Duke of Grafton, the Earl of Dartmouth, and Lord North, with Addresses to the Freeholders of the City of Bristol, &c. As the writings of a youth of his years, and of one who had never been further than a holiday ramble from his native place, these productions are altogether extraordinary, and "if," says Mr. Cottle, "the result had been less melancholy, it would have been amusing to find our young bard mysteriously addressing some of the first personages in the land."

The influence consequent on the total absence of re-

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ligious principles, to control the powerful but wayward intellect and the prematurely developed passions of the gifted boy, now became apparent. He has been accused by some as a vicious and profligate youth; but this appears to be contradicted by every credible authority, and to be utterly undeserving of credit. He is described by his old school-fellow and companion, Mr. Thistlethwaite, as "temperate in his living, moderate in his pleasures, and regular in his exercises." His own sister and mother amply corroborate this testimony; his temperance was carried the length of abstemiousness and resolute self-denial, from the fear, as he said, of *making himself more stupid than he had been created.* Moreover, the most prominent characteristic he displayed to the last, was strong natural affection towards his own family circle, manifested frequently by presents and other marks of kindness, shown at great personal sacrifice. Such proofs of a warm heart never yet were manifested by a libertine, whose foul selfishness speedily roots out every kindly sympathy of the heart. But perhaps the best proof of all of his regular and upright conduct is the manliness and independence with which he appeals to his old master for a character after they had parted from one another in mutual distaste. Writing to his mother from London, he concludes a lively letter on various topics, and principally in reference to his own prospects, by saying:—"Call upon Mr. Lambert; show him this, or tell him, if I deserve a recommendation, he would oblige me by giving me one,—if I do not, it will be beneath him to take notice of me." Nothing but conscious rectitude could dictate such an appeal; and it received ample justification from the testimony of Mr. Lambert, who acknowledged that he never once knew him to keep irregular hours, or indeed commit any other fault than the unpardonable one of *writing his stuff*, which rendered the poor scrivener so indignant and irascible. There is

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indeed unquestionable evidence in favour of Chatterton's having observed a strictly moral and upright line of conduct. His religious opinions, however, were altogether of an opposite nature, he had embraced the *sceptic's faith*, and he found the support and counsel its wretched creed was capable of affording in the hour of disappointment and despondency. He was subject to frequent fits of dejection and great melancholy, and when a hopeless gloom seemed to gather around him, the poor boy seems to have turned in his lonely despair to thoughts of self-destruction. How far he seriously entertained any such intentions while in Bristol may be questioned, notwithstanding the strange mode he adopted for declaring such, soon after the heartless conduct of Walpole had shipwrecked all his brightest hopes. Mr. Lambert found one day on his desk a copy-book containing one of the most singular documents ever penned, entitled "The last Will and Testament of Thomas Chatterton." It is headed, "All this wrote between 11 and 12 o'clock Saturday, in the utmost distress of mind, April 14, 1770." It was regarded by Mr. Lambert as altogether a credible and undoubted proof of his desperate intentions, and became the ground for a dissolution of the agreement between them. Nevertheless, we think few will read the following strange extracts from this remarkable composition, without regarding it as the mere half-humorous, half-melancholy ebullition of boyish feeling, which would evaporate in giving vent to its odd and wayward fancies. After some quaint remarks both in prose and verse, he proceeds:—"'This is the last will and testament of me, Thomas Chatterton, of the city of Bristol; being sound in body, or it is the fault of my last surgeon: the soundness of my mind, the coroner and jury are to be judges of, desiring them to take notice, that the most perfect masters of human nature in Bristol distinguish me by the title of the Mad Genius; therefore, if I do a mad action,

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it is conformable to every action of my life, which all savour'd of insanity.

'Item. If after my death, which will happen to-morrow night before eight o'clock, being the feast of the resurrection, the coroner and jury bring it in lunacy, I will and direct, that Paul Farr, Esq. and Mr. John Flower, at their joint expense, cause my body to be interred in the tomb of my fathers, and raise the monument over my body to the height of four feet five inches, placing the prevent flat stone on the top, and adding six tablets.'" Then follows inscriptions in memory of an ancestor, affirmed to have died A.D. 1210, and another in 1404; after which are the following on his father and himself:—

"'On the *third* tablet, in Roman characters:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

THOMAS CHATTERTON,

Subchanter of the cathedral of this city, whose ancestors were residents of St. Mary Redcliffe since the year 1140 He died the 7th of August, 1752.

'On the *fourth* tablet, in Roman characters:

TO THE MEMORY OF

THOMAS CHATTERTON;

Reader, judge not; if thou art a Christian—believe that he shall be judged by a superior power—to that power alone is he now answerable.

'And if the said Paul Farr and John Flower have souls so Bristolish as to refuse this my request, they will transmit a copy of my will to the society for supporting the bill of rights, whom I hereby empower to build the

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said monument, according to the aforesaid directions. And if they, the said Paul Farr and John Flower, should build the said monument; I will and direct that the 2nd edition of my Kew Gardens shall be dedicated to them in the following dedication—To Paul Farr and John Flower, Esqrs. this book is most humbly dedicated by the author's ghost.

'Item. I give all my vigour and fire of youth to Mr. George Catcott, being sensible he is most in want of it.

'Item. From the same charitable motive, I give and bequeath unto the Rev. Mr. Chaplin, senior, all my humility. To Mr. Burgum all my prosody and grammar, likewise one moiety of my modesty; the other moiety to any young lady who can prove, without blushing, that she wants that valuable commodity. To Bristol all my spirit and disinterestedness, parcels of goods unknown on her quay since the days of Canning and Rowley! I leave the Rev. Mr. Catcott some little of my free-thinking. I wish he and his brother George would know how far I am their real enemy, but I have an unlucky way of raillery, and when the strong fit of satire is upon me, I spare neither friend nor foe. This is my excuse for what I have said of them elsewhere. I leave Mr. Clayfield the sincerest thanks my gratitude can give, and I will and direct that whatever any person may think the pleasure of reading my works worth, they immediately pay their own valuation to him, since it is then become a lawful debt to me, and to him as my executor in this case.

'I leave my moderation to the politicians on both sides of the question. I leave my generosity to our present right worshipful mayor, Thomas Harris, Esq. I give my abstinence to the company at the sheriff's annual feast in general, more particularly the aldermen.

'Item. I give and bequeath to Mr. Matthew Mease

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a mourning ring, with this Motto, 'Alas, poor Chatterton!'—provided he pays for it himself. Item. I leave the young ladies all the letters they have had from me, assuring them that they need be under no apprehensions from the appearance of my ghost, for I die for none of them. Item. I leave all my debts, the whole not five pounds, to the payment of the charitable and generous chamber of Bristol, on penalty, if refused, to hinder every member from a good dinner, by appearing in the form of a bailiff. If in defiance of this terrible spectre, they obstinately persist in refusing to discharge my debts, let my two creditors apply to the supporters of the bill of rights. Item. I leave my mother and sister to the protection of my friends, if I have any. Executed in the presence of Omniscience this 14th of April, 1770.

'THOS. CHATTERTON.'"

This closed the connection between Chatterton and Mr. Lambert. The latter sent for Mr. Barrett, the antiquarian and historian of Bristol, whom Chatterton appears to have always regarded with warm gratitude and friendship, and the passionate boy was at once moved to tears by his appeal to his kindlier feelings, though he indignantly rejected the accusation of keeping bad company, adding, in a letter written to Mr. Barrett immediately after, "I keep no worse company than myself," —a remark that should perhaps find a part at least of its fair explanation in the fact that the young Poet passed many hours and days with no society but his own excited fancies, and the studies that were likely to prove far more congenial to such a youth than the company into which he was involuntarily thrown. Mr. Lambert put the worst construction on Chatterton's strange will, and dismissed him from his service after he had been with him about two years and nine months. Both appear to

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have been equally well pleased at the prospect of a separation; and speedily after, Chatterton bade a final adieu to Bristol and all its endearing as well as embittering associations.

CHAPTER IX.

LONDON.

How many thousands of young and sanguine aspirants for fame and fortune are annually swallowed up in the vast abyss of the great metropolis, it were difficult to tell. It is the great goal of hope towards which all are eager to direct their steps, confident that there must be room there for each of them to play his part with success; and so it was with poor Chatterton, who, when released from the trammels of his irksome situation, set off forthwith full of the liveliest hopes to the great theatre of London. In the following lively letter to his mother he describes his journey to town:—

"London, April 26, 1770.

"DEAR MOTHER,—Here I am, safe, and in high spirits. To give you a journal of my tour would not be unnecessary. After riding in the basket to Brislington, I mounted the top of the coach, and rid easy; and was agreeably entertained with the conversation of a quaker *in dress*, but little so in personals and behaviour. This laughing Friend, who is a carver, lamented his having sent his tools to Worcester, as otherwise he would have accompanied me to London. I left him at Bath, when, finding it rained pretty fast, I entered an inside passenger to Speenhamland, the half-way stage, paying seven shillings

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'Twas lucky I did so, for it snowed all night, and on Marlborough Downs the snow was near a foot high.

At seven in the morning I breakfasted at Speenhamland, and then mounted the coach-box for the remainder of the day, which was a remarkably fine one. Honest gee-hoo complimented me with assuring me, that I sat bolder and tighter than any person who ever rid with him. Dined at Stroud most luxuriantly, with a young gentleman who had slept all the preceding night in the machine; and an old mercantile genius, whose school-boy son had a great deal of wit, as the father thought, in remarking that Windsor was as old as *our Saviour's time.*

Got into London about five o'clock in the evening—called upon Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Fell, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Dodsley. Great encouragement from them; all approved of my design; shall soon be settled. Call upon Mr. Lambert, shew him this, or tell him, if I deserve a recommendation, he would oblige me to give me one,—if I do not, it will be beneath him to take notice of me. Seen all aunts, cousins, all well, and I am welcome. Mr. T. Wensley is alive, and coming home. Sister, grandmother, &c. &c. &c. remember.—I remain, your dutiful Son, "T. CHATTERTON."

Succeeding letters display the same lively humour and youthful hope. He had received liberal offers from the booksellers, and with all his fine imagination and ardent genius, he was a child in his knowledge of the ways of the world. He seemed one who had overstepped childhood and youth, and reached maturity of intellect immediately on the close of his infant years. Yet in overleaping the tedious pupilage by which ordinary minds are brought to slow maturity, he had also missed the experience which rewards the toil; so that we find him a man in intellect and yet a child in practical knowledge and habits; driven about by passions and feelings that burst on him

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unawares, he scarcely knew how; and now the noble boy is cast, like a gallant but ill-ballasted vessel, alone and without rudder or compass, on the troubled sea of London life. He believed all that was promised by the publishers; he anticipated a fortune, which he delighted himself in thinking would be shared by those most dear to him. He proved, moreover, his sincerity, by lavishing his slender gains in the purchase of presents for his mother and sister.

The same humourous fancies that appear in his *will* are found even in the entry of pecuniary receipts in his notebook. He was introduced to the Lord Mayor Beckford, whose statue now graces the Guild Hall of London, just at the time that he had acquired a temporary notoriety by the speech which is engraved on his monument. The following extract from the appendix to Walpole's defence, intended to furnish an abstract of Chatterton's productions, gives an idea of the strange humours of the boy.

"A letter to the Lord Mayor Beckford, signed Probus, dated May 26, 1770.—This is a violent abuse of government for rejecting the remonstrance, and begins thus:—'When the endeavours of a spirited people to free themselves from an insupportable slavery.' On the back of this essay, which is directed to Carey, is this endorsement:—

Accepted by Bingley, set, for and thrown out of the North Britain, 21 June, on account of the Lord Mayor's death.

Lost by his death on this essay,	£1	11	6
Gained in elegies, . .	2	2	0
——— in essays, . .	3	3	0
Am glad he is dead by . .	3	13	6"

This, which was evidently no more than the natural ebullition of boyish feeling at unexpected success after a severe disappointment of his hopes, is thus unfeelingly and shamefully commented on by the flippant Walpole

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in a private letter to Mr. Cole, to whom he is remarking on the Rowley controversy:—"Dr. Glynn's foolish evidence made me laugh, and so did Mr. Bryant's sensibility for me. He says Chatterton treated me very *cruelly*, in one of his writings; I am sure I did not feel it so. I suppose Bryant means under the title of Baron of Otranto, which is written with humour: I must have been the sensitive plant, if any thing in that character had hurt me! Mr. Bryant too, and the Dean, as I see by extracts in the papers, have decorated Chatterton with sanctimonious honour. Think of that young rascal's note, by summing up his gains and losses, by writing for and against Beckford, he says, 'am glad he is dead by £3 13s. 6d.' There was a lad of too nice honour to be guilty of a forgery! and a lad, who they do not deny forged the poems in the style of Ossian, and fifty other things."

The incidents of Chatterton's career in London are few and melancholy indeed, after this one gleam of hope that brightened his prospects for a moment, like the glance of a sunbeam across the gathering clouds that herald a tempest. They are soon told. While the poor sanguine boy was sending presents to his mother and sister, and filling his letters with anticipations of the fortune he would yet be able to bestow on them, a little pocket-book, which was obtained by his sister after his death, discloses the fact that all he had received for the literary labour of four months, including the sum of ten shillings and sixpence for sixteen songs, was four pounds, fifteen shillings and ninepence; while for the greater portion of his ingenious toil, the notes of the same little book reveal the fact that he never got paid. With what agonized feelings must the poor boy have summed up these accounts, at the very time that he was starving, and completed the entry as it there stands, showing that the publishers owed him at the period eleven pounds for the various articles he had furnished them with;—articles over which he had

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spent the midnight lamp, and for which he in vain asked the humble pittance acknowledged as his due.

Pride and sensitiveness combined to mislead the poor child of genius. No ray of a brighter hope stole in at that dark hour to cheer his heart, and bid him believe in the Fatherhood of God. All was dark without and within. His latest biographer thus relates the closing scene of this mournful tragedy:—"In the depth of his distress and poverty, he addressed a letter to his former friend, Mr. Barrett, in which he applied to him for a recommendation to the appointment of surgeon's mate to Africa. This was refused, and his last hope forsook him; but his native unconquerable pride still remained. Reduced to extreme indigence, he yet shrank from incurring obligations from strangers. Mrs. Angel stated, that for two days, when he did not absent himself from his room, he went without sustenance of any kind; on one occasion, when she knew him to be in want of food, she begged he would take a little dinner with her; he was offended at the invitation, of which he hinted he was not in want, and assured her he was not hungry. Mr. Cross, also, an apothecary in Brook Street, gave evidence that he repeatedly pressed Chatterton to dine or sup with him; and when, with great difficulty, he was one evening prevailed on to partake of a barrel of oysters, he was observed to eat voraciously.

Three days before his death, when walking in company with a friend in St. Pancras's churchyard, reading the epitaphs, he was so deep in thought as he walked on, that not perceiving a grave which was just dug he fell into it; his friend observing his situation came to his assistance, and as he helped him out, told him, in a jocular manner, he was happy in beholding the resurrection of genius. Poor Chatterton smiled, and taking his companion by the arm, replied, 'My dear friend, I feel the sting of a speedy dissolution. I have been at war with the grave for some time, and find it is not so easy to

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vanquish as I imagined: we can find an asylum from every creditor but that.' His friend endeavoured to divert his thoughts from the gloomy reflection; but what will not melancholy and adversity subjugate?

In the desperate circumstances in which he was now placed, his mind reverted to what he had unhappily accustomed himself to regard as a last resource. On the 24th of August, 1770, Thomas Chatterton, at the age of seventeen years and nine months, overcome by despair and distress, terminated his clouded career by swallowing poison—according to the best authorities, *arsenic* in *water*, —and died in consequence the next day. His room, when broken open, was found covered with little scraps of paper, and all his unfinished pieces were cautiously destroyed before his death. An inquest was held on his body, and he was interred in the burying-ground of Shoe Lane workhouse. Whether his body was exhumed and re-interred in Bristol, as has been affirmed, is purely a matter of speculation.

A few days after the unhappy termination of Chatterton's life, Dr. Fry, head of St. John's College, in Oxford, went to Bristol in order to search into the history of Rowley and Chatterton, and to patronise the latter. It was too late, the only intelligence he received was, that the young Bristol Poet was no more.

I wonder not, yet mourn, that he
  Should darkly turn away
From waking pain to dreamless sleep;
  No kind or fostering ray
Shone o'er him;—all his path below
Was overgloom'd by clouds of woe.
When hopes like rainbow colours pass'd,
(Too bright, too beautiful to last,)
His daring hand unstrung the lyre,
  Yet will its music never die!
But he, with all those 'souls of fire,'
Who with a master's magic spell
Have struck the minstrel's harp so well
  Shall share an immortality.

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Be theirs, who desecrate his name,
A lasting heritage of shame!"

Such was the painful close of a life whose bright promise was chequered by so much cloud, and whose early close is one of the very saddest in the whole strange history of genius. Insanity is believed to have been hereditary in the family, and it cannot be doubted that the clash of the strange emotions of pride and cruel wrong, neglect, hunger, and at length despair, were sufficient to unhinge the strongest mind, unaided by the spirit of hope which religion alone has power to bestow.

A portrait of Chatterton, when he was about twelve years of age, accompanies the life of him by Mr. Dix, and conveys a wonderful idea of the unwonted fervour and fire of genius which every action of his life displayed. His eye more especially appears to have attracted all who saw him from its unusual brightness and power. His face and figure were manly, and his appearance singularly prepossessing. Mr. Catcott described his eye as like that of a hawk, and added, that it seemed as if one could see his soul through it. It was still more closely observed by his friend, Mr. Barrett, who, as a surgeon, was struck with the peculiarity, and frequently examined its singular glow when excited by any interesting discussion. He remarks—"He never saw such eyes—one was still more remarkable than the other. You might see the fire roll at the bottom of them, as you sometimes do in a black eye, but never in grey ones, which his were. Mr. Barrett used often to send for him from Colston's school, and differ from him in opinion, on purpose to make him earnest, and to see how wonderfully his eye would strike fire, kindle, and blaze up."

Poor boy! who that possesses wealth and influence would not envy Horace Walpole the opportunity he threw away, of aiding so nobly gifted a child to escape from

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his hard lot? Let those who would judge him remember that he was but a boy at the last,—a poor, friendless boy, in the vast solitude of London; that he had none to advise with, none to speak comfort to him, or whisper of hope in that dark hour of agony and despair. A sadder scene was never enacted in that vast arena of sorrow, suffering, and sin, than was passing in the lonely garret in Holborn, when Chatterton expired, alone,—alone, save that the eye of God was even there.

Dr. Sherwin, of Bath, one of the writers on the Rowley controversy, thus introduces a just comparison drawn between Chatterton and the poet Savage, a man of the most depraved tastes and habits, who died in the jail of Bristol, —the native place of Chatterton,—to which he had been sent by an exasperated creditor:—

"It is recorded in Dr. Johnson's celebrated Life of Savage, that that eccentric genius paid the debt of nature in Bristol. I think the fact worthy of notice, and I am the more induced to remind you of the circumstance, from my being in possession of a volume of Johnson's Lives of the Poets, at the conclusion of which I find the following marginal note written in a neat and very legible hand:—

'It is impossible to read this most eloquent and interesting narrative without drawing comparisons, and recollecting the fate of poor Chatterton. A youth possessed of abilities fully equal, and, if we believe in his being the author of the poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, far superior to those of Savage. A youth who, notwithstanding all the obloquy and calumny heaped upon his memory, we have the strongest reasons for believing, was never once intoxicated with strong drink during the whole course of his life; who was never known to have borrowed a single shilling from any of his comrades or acquaintance; who, in the receipt of a slender weekly income, the produce of his pen, was in the habit of making presents to his nearest

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relatives; and who, during his most pressing necessities, died without leaving one debt behind him. It is impossible, I say, not to draw the comparison betwixt such a youth and the ungrateful, unprincipled, reprobate, spendthrift, and drunkard, who has here obtained not only the extenuating apologies, but even the eulogies of the most celebrated moralist of the age; whilst the noble and high-spirited youth had, on the contrary, every juvenile indiscretion aggravated, and even the very circumstances which have immortalized his name, and which ought to have embalmed his memory, shamefully traduced under the odious appellation of a forgery, in the worst and most disgraceful sense of the word; and that too by a combination of eminent literary characters, who have assumed and (with many) have acquired the honourable distinction of arbiters of taste, and masters of opinion.'"

In a similar spirit of just admiration Mr. Dix vindicates his character, and claims for him his true place as the most remarkable example of early genius, in the following comparison between him and the celebrated James Crichton, commonly styled the *Admirable Crichton*:—"Chatterton has been designated by many as the Crichton of his time; but that extraordinary individual cannot be fairly compared with him, when we consider either the precocity or the sum of his talents. It must be remembered that the admirable Crichton studied at the University of St. Andrews under Rutherford and Buchanan, and that when he left that seat of learning, he was rather more than three years older than Chatterton was at the time of his death; Crichton, therefore, derived all the advantages of an elegant and classical education, whilst Chatterton received his scanty stock of scholastic lore from a charity school, where only reading, writing, and arithmetic were taught. The end, both of Chatterton and Crichton, was disastrous, too often the fate of great geniuses; one perished in his pride and 'solemn agony'

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in a garret in High Holborn, and the other fell by the sword of his pupil in the streets of Mantua."

It is vain to conjecture what might have happened had the daring spirit that burned so strongly within the childlike frame of Chatterton been fostered into kindly maturity by a brighter fortune. He was gifted with powers of mind altogether surpassing those of almost any man of his time, and therefore it cannot be doubted that the results to us would have been noble and well worthy of our treasuring, had he lived to reach such a maturity as was promised in his dawn. At the same time it must be acknowledged that the deeply mournful fate of the gifted boy has conferred on him an interest with thousands, that his strange old-world inventions would never have done, since their antique garb would ever have repelled the majority from searching for their hidden beauties. His life is one that teaches many lessons to hopeless and faithless despairing ones, whether they are the gifted or the lowly; it shows that man dies "as the fool dieth," even as the brutes that perish, if he leans on the sceptic's faith and refuses to flee to that refuge of the weary and heavy laden, which Christ, the man of sorrows, has won for the most sorrowful. Only a few days later and poor Chatterton might have found the grasp of a friendly hand and returned the glance of a kindly eye. Dr. Fry, of Oxford, a scholar and a man of taste, already interested in his writings, was on the way to seek him out. The halls of Oxford, and the highest honours that England had to offer to the scholar and the man of genius, might have been his. But it was in vain; a pauper's grave had closed over the remains of that gifted boy, all unheeded by the busy crowds of the vast capital; and a poor widowed mother and sister were nearly the sole mourners for him, who has since received more posthumous honours from the writings of kindred genius than ever were awarded to genius and misfortune. For these,

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however, we have no room, but shall close this sketch of the "marvellous boy" with the following sanguine conceptions of what might have been his career, with which his latest biographer has finished an elaborate narrative of his life:—"Whatever may have been the faults of Chatterton, let it be remembered that he was but a boy. Where is there one who has died so young, whose fame has survived so long? And it is but a fair presumption, that had he received half the patronage enjoyed by many far less deserving, he would have lived to have realized those ardent expectations excited by the perusal of his works—he would have lived to have merged the foibles of his early years in the splendour of enlightened manhood: they say, 'best men are moulded out of faults;' he would have lived to have nobly earned, and proudly claimed, a most conspicuous elevation on the poetic mount. His career was indeed eventful, and can scarcely be better described than it is in the following beautiful stanza of Shelley:—

'Mid others of less note came one frail form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
Whose thunder is its knell: he, as I guess,
Had gazed on nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts along that rugged way
Pursued like raging hounds, their father and their prey.'"

CHAPTER X.

KIRKE WHITE AND SHELLEY.

On the 21st of March, 1785, Henry Kirke White was born at Nottingham, the son of a poor butcher, who early

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destined him to be his assistant in his homely and unpleasant trade. The wife of John White, the Nottingham butcher, was Mary Neville, the daughter of a respectable Staffordshire family, a woman of some education and of a superior cast of mind. Under the tuition of his mother Henry appears to have made rapid progress in his early studies. At the age of seven he manifested an ardent love of reading, and even attempted with considerable success to commit his thoughts to paper; and at the age of thirteen he had begun those poetical compositions which have preserved his name, associated with honourable and grateful tributes of admiration. At the age of thirteen he had mastered the French language, and otherwise made considerable progress in his education. His father nevertheless persisted in his intention of bringing him up to his own business, notwithstanding the invincible repugnance he manifested to it. He was accordingly set to carry the butcher's basket, and even while some hours were allowed to be devoted to his favourite studies, this continued to form the chief part of his daily occupation.

At the age of fourteen an entire stop was put to his education, and he appeared destined to finish his course in the drudgery of his father's hateful trade. At this time his mother had succeeded, in conjunction with her daughter, in establishing a boarding and day-school for girls, and by the assistance she was thereby enabled to contribute to the family income, she acquired influence enough to induce her husband to relax his determination as to the destined trade of the studious boy.

Thus released from the hated butcher's basket, some difficulty seems to have been experienced in deciding on his destination, as his parents' humble resources precluded the idea of giving him a finished education.

He was at length, however, placed in an attorney's office, on terms of lengthened servitude, to make up for his inability to pay the usual premium. Before, however,

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the two years of probation had expired, he had succeeded, almost without assistance, in acquiring considerable knowledge of Latin and in making some progress in Greek. To these he added the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese languages; while his attention was also engaged on chemistry, astronomy, and electricity; and he amused himself in his rare moments of leisure with drawing and music, in both of which he manifested considerable skill. In his fifteenth year Kirke White had become a frequent contributor to several periodical publications, and in his seventeenth he was induced by Mr. Thomas Hill, the proprietor of the Monthly Mirror, in which many of his pieces had appeared, to prepare a volume of poems for the press.

In a pecuniary point of view this first issue of the young Poet's works was anything but fortunate; it exercised, however, a most important influence on his future life and fame, for it was the means of introducing him to Southey, who afterwards became his biographer, and by the affectionate enthusiasm with which he performed that task there can be little doubt that Kirke White's name has been permanently ranked among the Poets of England, in a way that without such aid it may reasonably be doubted if it ever would have been.

A great and important change had been effected on the position of the young Poet, since he had seemed destined to spend his days at a butcher's stall. A far more important one, however, was about to take place. Like other young men whose minds have been closely directed towards intellectual pursuits, he had been seduced by the pride of intellect, and the natural waywardness of the human heart, to speculate with daring presumption on the vital truths of religion. Like poor Chatterton, and a thousand others of less note, he had gone far towards an avowance of the Sceptic's creed. Happily, however, the young Poet was arrested in his presumptuous career.

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Before his first volume of poems had been issued to the subscribers, a total change had been wrought on his opinions and his whole intellectual being. From an indifference to religion and a contempt of revealed truth, he had become actuated with deep and passionate convictions of the truth of Christianity. The gospel, which has brought life and immortality to light, had entered into his heart with power, and thenceforth he was altogether changed,—a *new creature*. To this all-important change the future steps of his brief life may be traced. He now longed to become a preacher of that faith which once he despised. Through the influence of Mr. Simeon, to whom he was recommended, he at length obtained a sizarship in St. John's College, Cambridge, and such was the dilligence and success with which he pursued the preparatory studies for his examination, that, at the end of the first term of his collegiate course, he was pronounced the first man of his year.

The college has proved the grave of thousands of ardent and aspiring geniuses, and Kirke White was destined to be another of the victims of learning. He had devoted himself with all the energy of youthful ambition and hope, to prepare for becoming candidate for a university scholarship. But the body refused to second the ardour of his mind; his strength and spirits sunk under his exertions, and when the day came on which he should have triumphed, he was compelled to withdraw from the examination. That his success was certain may be concluded from the position he attained only a fortnight afterwards among the whole students of his own standing.

After attaining the honourable position of first man of his year at such a cost, Kirke White paid a short visit to London, the excitement and novelty of which beguiled him for a time from the fears which his failing strength excited. He returned to Cambridge the following year, and again occupied the place of honour at the college

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examination, besides receiving other distinguishing marks of admiration paid to his genius and great acquirements. The poems written at the same period, however, painfully disclose the deadly strife by which the victory was purchased; Christian hope and resignation alternate with despondency and rebellious questionings of Providence. The true faith of the believer, however, always predominates, and brightens towards the swift close of such high anticipations. One more vacation transpired amid deceitful hopes—and the ardent student returned to his college only to die. With strange pathos Byron wrote of the young aspirant for fame, thus snatched away in the very dawn of bright anticipations:—

> Unhappy White, while life was in its spring,
> And thy young muse just waved her joyous wing,
> The spoiler came, and all her boasted care
> Has sought the grave, to sleep for ever there.

Poor Byron knew nothing of the bright hopes that cheered the death-bed of the scholar. In sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection was the young Poet committed to the dust, and many a Christian pilgrim, even from distant lands, has since gazed with interest on his memorial stone.

In striking contrast to the brief history of Kirke White is that of his contemporary, Shelley. He was born the heir of an illustrious ancestry, and enjoyed every advantage that wealth can bestow. In natural powers of intellect he was no way inferior to Kirke White; in poetic genius he unquestionably surpassed him; and in natural sweetness and amiability of disposition he appears to have been one of the most loveable of men. In him, however, the scepticism, so early checked in Kirke White by the power of vital religion, was fostered by injudicious opposition. He became deeply immersed in the daring speculations of Hume, and so confident in his own cause, that he challenged the professors at Oxford

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to refute his opinions. The consequence was, that he was expelled from his college, and became hardened in the creed he adopted by believing himself a martyr to truth. It is painful indeed to glance at the course that followed. A hasty and thoughtless marriage involved him in much misery; he was disowned by his father, and suffered many privations for a time; he married again on the death of his first wife, and found in his second choice a loving helpmate, who has since become his faithful biographer. His life, however, was a brief one, and its close was sudden and altogether sad. England had ceased to have any attractions for him who had been driven forth alike from the halls of learning and the paternal roof. Wandering amid the luxuriant scenery of Italy, he delighted himself with frequent boating excursions—at all times a favourite amusement with him. In one of these, a sudden squall upset the frail bark of the Poet, and a week after, his lifeless body was washed ashore. In order to avoid the quarantine laws, and secure for him burial beside the grave of his friend and brother Poet, Keats, at Rome, his friends adopted the ancient mode of cremation. Wood was collected on the shore, and the body laid above it, while his friends stood around the unwonted bier. They fired the funeral pile, and the ashes of the Poet were conveyed to the Imperial City, where they now lie beside the grave of Keats, and of a favourite child that Shelley had committed there to its last repose. No more mournful grave was ever wept over. Poor Shelley is described by all who knew him as one of the most generous and amiable of men. His ambition was elevated and unselfish, and his genius undoubtedly of a high order. What change might not have been wrought on such a mind? What could not Christianity have done to make him one of the teachers of mankind?

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SCIENTIFIC GENIUS.

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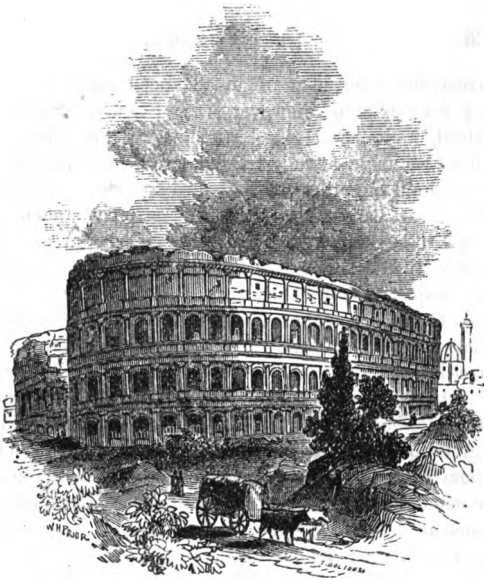

"Wandering, an invalid, through the magnificent ruins of the Colosseum at Rome, he there meets with a spirit who conducts him through the whole planetary system."
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SCIENTIFIC GENIUS.

CHAPTER I.—NAPIER, HALES, BLACK, DAVY.

IN treating of Poetry and the Fine Arts, our subjects have been selected chiefly from the earlier periods of modern European history, because the genius that displays itself in these forms of beauty and power has more frequently been manifested in such progressive stages of civilization than amid the perfect

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luxury and refinement of an advanced state of society. It is very different, however, with Science. Some few, indeed, of its most gifted students, as Friar Bacon, of whom we have already treated, are found like solitary lights amid the otherwise universal ignorance and darkness of early ages; but even these solitary students are found to have pursued it in a spirit differing greatly from that of the calm scientific investigator of modern times, who reaps the fruits of gradual enlightenment and freedom from those trammels of superstition by which the Alchemists and Astrologers of earlier ages were so frequently led away from the most valuable pursuits in chase of a shadow. Even the illustrious Napier, the inventor of Logarithms,—of whom Hume remarks, that the title of a great man is more justly due to him than to any other whom his country ever produced,—is thus spoken of by one of his biographers:—"In his more secluded residence at Gartness, he had both a waterfall and a mill in his immediate neighbourhood, which considerably interrupted his studies. He was, however, a great deal more tolerant of the waterfall than of the mill; for while the one produced an incessant and equable sound, the other was attended with an irregular *clack-clack*, which marred the processes of his mind, and sometimes even rendered it necessary for him, when engaged in an unusually abstruse calculation, to desire the miller to stop work. He often walked abroad in the evening, in a long mantle, and attended by a large dog; and these circumstances, working upon minds totally unable to appreciate the real nature of his researches, raised a popular rumour of his being addicted to the black art. It is certain that, no more than other great men of his age, was he exempt from a belief in several sciences now fully proved to have been full of imposture. The practice of forming theories only from facts, however reasonable and unavoidable it may appear, was enforced only for the first time by a

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contemporary of Napier—the celebrated Bacon; and as yet, the bounds between true and false knowledge were hardly known. Napier, therefore, practised an art which seems nearly akin to divination, as is proved by a contract entered into, in 1594, between him and Logan of Fastcastle—afterwards so celebrated for his concern in the Gowry conspiracy. This document states it to have been agreed upon, that, as there were old reports and appearances that a sum of money was hid within Logan's house of Fastcastle, John Napier should do his utmost diligence to search and seek out, and by all craft and ingine [a phrase for mental power] to find out the same, or make it sure that no such thing has been there. For his reward he was to have the exact third of all that was found, and to be safely guarded by Logan back to Edinburgh; and in case he should find nothing, after all trial and diligence taken, he was content to refer the satisfaction of his travels and pains to the discretion of Logan. What was the result of the attempt, or if the attempt itself was ever made, has not been ascertained."

With such fancies, leading astray even the most gifted intellects, it need not excite our wonder that the practice of science should have made slow and fitful progress in the hands of its earliest cultivators, and that it should have been reserved almost for our own day to elevate some of the most important branches of science into a just claim to take their rank under such a classification. The progress of science, however, during the last century, has been amply sufficient to satisfy its most sanguine students. It has seemed as a giant, awakening refreshed from long slumber, and overcoming every difficulty with easy effort. An intelligent scientific author, writing in 1845, remarks:—"It is now exactly a hundred years since Prince Charles Stuart raised in Scotland the standard of rebellion. The revolution which he headed, and from which men hoped and feared so much, was doomed to

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perish as an untimely birth, and after filling the land with wailing widows, and weeping children, and hunted fugitives, knowing not where to rest their weary feet, left no more abiding fruit behind it, than a woeful harvest of broken hearts and ruined fortunes. At the same period the seeds were sown of a great revolution in the world of science, whereof no man took heed; but which was destined in the fulness of time, by its steam-engine, its bleaching powder, its safety-lamp, and its manifold other 'realized ideas,' to increase incalculably the resources of the useful arts, and to effect a greater alteration in the political relations of the whole globe, than the mere substitution of a Stuart for a Guelph on the throne of these realms could ever have done. The Jacobite rebellion was like the gourd of the prophet Jonah, 'which came up in a night, and withered in a night;' but the revolution of which we are to speak, though at first it was 'like a grain of mustard-seed which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds which be in the earth,' was soon to become a tree like that which the king of Babylon saw in the visions of the night, which 'was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the ends of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, *and in it was meat for all.*'

Two years before the eventful '45, appeared the second and concluding volume of a work, which sounded forth in Great Britain the first note of that revolutionary war, which was to overthrow the existing chemical dynasties. Its author was Stephen Hales, D.D., a clergyman of the Church of England. It is true that the excellent and accomplished Robert Boyle, the sagacious Hook, and Mayow of Oxford among his countrymen; that Glauber, Van Helmont, Rey, and Moitrel d'Elément upon the continent; besides other less distinguished persons both at home and abroad, whom fame speaks little of, or has

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altogether forgotten, had anticipated to some extent what he now published in full. They had given forth, however, either an uncertain or an insufficient sound, which was not listened to, or was misunderstood, or had been forgotten, so that men had not prepared themselves for the battle. But the signal-note of Hales was caught up, and prolonged by Black, and Priestley, and Cavendish, and Bergman, and Scheele, and Lavoisier, so that Europe is still ringing with the sound of it."

During the earlier part of last century no other idea was entertained of the numerous gases that play so important a part in chemical science, than the vulgar notion of an elastic and generally invisible atmosphere,—one indeed of the four supposed simple elements air, earth, fire, and water, into which the ancients had arranged the subdivisions of the visible and material universe. Dr. Stephen Hales, the clergyman above referred to, was one of the first to throw new light on this important branch of chemistry, by a series of researches which he afterwards laid before the Royal Society,—the earliest of them in 1727. Stephen Hales was born at Beckesbourn, in Kent, September 7th, 1667. In 1702 he had taken his degree and obtained a fellowship at Benet College, Cambridge; and, having taken holy orders in the Church of England, he was presented a few years after to the perpetual curacy of Teddington, near Twickenham, where he resided ever afterwards to the end of his life. Even while a student at Cambridge a large portion of his attention appears to have been devoted to physical researches, which continued to be his favourite pursuit during life. His first experiments were connected with vegetable physiology, the result of which he published under the name of "Vegetable Statics," which treated of the circulation of the sap in plants. This was followed up a few years afterwards by another work, having a similar object in view in reference to the blood of animals.

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These works were translated into French, Italian, Dutch, and German, and speedily obtained for their author a European reputation.

The experiments pursued by Hales in the course of these researches led him to notice some curious phenomena in reference to the respiration of plants, in consequence of which he entered upon a new inquiry as to the nature of air, in which he spent above two years. In the state of chemical knowledge at that period, he was entering thereby on the threshold of an immense class of most important truths, hitherto undisclosed. Such perfect ignorance, however, then prevailed on the subject, that many of the most valuable phenomena disclosed in the course of these experiments were allowed to pass unnoted by this ingenious inquirer. His object, as he himself defines it, was to analyze air, but in the very narrow state of knowledge in chemistry at that period, the most important analyses passed before his eyes without the valuable truths they now disclose to us being noted or understood. "From his own statements," says an intelligent modern chemist, "it appears that, in these researches, he must have prepared oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, chlorine, nitric oxide, carbonic oxide, carbonic acid, sulphurous acid and coal gas; besides other gases. He was aware that some of these possessed peculiar colours and odours; that some were soluble in water, and others not; that some were combustible, and others supporters of combustion: while a third class neither burned nor supported combustion. He knew, moreover, that certain of them were destructive to animal life; and that such at least as were insoluble in water, might be washed many times with it, and preserved for long periods without undergoing any change in their properties. Yet all this diversity and persistence of property, and even the striking phenomenon which he often observed, of a dark ruddy gas appearing when nitric oxide and air were

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mingled, failed to suggest to him that he was dealing with bodies specifically distinct, and he believed these gases to be identical in nature with each other, and with common air. He founded this conclusion mainly upon two observations. The characteristic properties of atmospheric air he considered to be its elasticity and specific gravity. By well-devised experiments he quickly ascertained, that several of the gases contracted and expanded under pressure, to the same extent that air did; and from this he inferred, what we know to be a truth, that all gases possess the same elasticity. The question of a common specific gravity he examined, by weighing a jar filled with one of the gases, and afterwards a second time filled with common air, which is exactly the method followed at the present day. But owing to the inconvenient magnitude and want of delicacy of his apparatus, he failed to detect any difference in the few trials which he made, and was thus led to the conclusion that all gases possess the same density: whereas one of them, hydrogen, is twenty-two times lighter than another, carbonic acid; the latter being heavier by a half than air; the former fourteen and a half times lighter. These observations he adduces as proofs, that the great quantities of air which he obtained from bodies by distillation were 'true air, and not mere flatulent vapour:' by which term 'true air' he intended to signify not merely that they were permanent gases, as distinguished from temporary vapours, but further that they were identical in every respect with common or atmospheric air.

Satisfied in this way of their identity with air in elasticity and density, the striking differences of the gases in sensible properties, their really interesting characters in a chemical point of view, went for nothing in his eyes. He speculated little on the cause of such differences; but so far as he did, he referred them to some hypothetical 'fumes,' 'vapours,' or 'acid and sulphurous spirits,'

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which by their presence 'tainted,' to use his own words, or 'infected' the one universal and elementary air. Explanations of this kind were the fashion of the day, and it need not surprise us that Hales, who after that fashion included solid bodies the most unlike each other under a common name of 'salt' or 'sulphur,' should identify gases equally dissimilar among themselves under a common title of air. But though he failed to detect the significance of the phenomena, so amply spread before him, and erred greatly, Hales had clearer notions as to the assumptions by solid bodies of an elastic form, than any of his contemporaries or predecessors, except perhaps Newton. His conceptions of the cause which determined the change from the state of solidity to that of gaseity were vague enough, but he distinguished between those portions of air or gas which arose from the interstices or pores of the bodies yielding it, and such as were previously 'wrought into the substance' and arose 'from the most fixed parts of them.' To Hales in truth belongs the great merit of having first shown how largely gases enter into the constitution of bodies, and that no analysis of these, which left them out of consideration, could be of value. The result of his labours was to add a new element in the shape of air to the accredited ones of water, earth, salt, and sulphur; the scanty and incoherent materials out of which the chemistry of that era was constructed."

Dr. Hales's genius was in truth mainly of a very practical turn. His inquiries, which were of the most diversified character, nearly all refer to some direct application of science to daily uses; and in this respect his experiments on the nature of air were applied to the practical and truly benevolent end of ventilating hospitals, prisons, convict-ships, and other unhealthy places, where multitudes of human beings were forced to live together in a confined space. The frightful state of some of these

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wretched abodes of crime may be conceived by the results of his earliest benevolent and truly Christian labours on behalf of the inmates of the Savoy prison. There prevailed in nearly all the large prisons of the kingdom a dreadful distemper, known as the jail fever, produced by the crowding together of those wretched slaves of vice and crime, without the least attention to cleanliness or purity of air. Previous to the year 1749, when Dr. Hales undertook the ventilation of the Savoy prison, the mortality was frequently a hundred in a year, the victims of that fatal distemper; while only four persons died of it during the period immediately succeeding it, extending from 1749 to 1752, although during one of these years 240 prisoners were crowded into its dungeons. The old jail of Newgate was in like manner benefited by his ingenious design, and Dr. Hales's plan of ventilation was very speedily applied in France, with equally beneficial results, in prisons, hospitals, ships of war, and even for the preservation of granaries.

About the very time that Dr. Hales was publishing his well-known volume of "Vegetable Statics, or Experiments on the Sap in Vegetables," and when the philosophers of France were just turning with interest to his curious inquiries, there was born there, on the banks of the Garonne, a child of Scottish parents, who was destined to arrest the more valuable chemical truths that had eluded the English philosopher in his important researches into the nature of air. Joseph Black, the celebrated Scottish chemist, as we are generally accustomed to consider him, has been claimed by French philosophers as a countryman of their own, because of his birth in France. His mother, however, who was his early instructer, and a woman of great intelligence, was a native of Scotland, a daughter of Robert Gordon, Esq., of Hillhead, in Aberdeen: his father, though born at Belfast, was also descended of an old Scottish family, and their son Joseph

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was early sent to the land of his fathers to pursue the studies which, during the remainder of his life, he followed there with so much honour and success. To Scotland, therefore, his name may reasonably be conceded, as one justly ranking among her distinguished men of science. The youth was sent first to Belfast, his father's native place, where he pursued his scholastic studies for several years; and he afterwards proceeded to Glasgow, in 1746, to complete his education at the College of Glasgow. There it was that he first manifested that taste for physical science which ever after became the ruling passion of his mind, and was what first led him to choose the medical profession, as that most likely to afford him ample scope for the pursuit of his favourite studies. "It was about this time that the celebrated Dr. Cullen had been appointed lecturer on chemistry in Glasgow University. Hitherto this science had been only treated as a curious, and, in some respects, a useless art. This great man, conscious of his own strength, and taking a wide and comprehensive view, saw the unoccupied field of philosophical chemistry open before him. He was satisfied that it was susceptible of great improvement, by means of liberal inquiry and rational investigation. It was perhaps the good fortune of Dr. Black, in falling under such a master, that gave his mind its peculiar bent in favour of this department of physical science. His previous acquirements and extraordinary aptitude speedily became known to Dr. Cullen, who was at all times remarkable for the personal attentions he paid to his pupils. Black became a valuable assistant to Dr. Cullen in his chemical operations, and his experiments were sometimes publicly adduced in the lecture, as a sufficient authority for various new facts. Thus commenced a friendship between two great men, which was never afterwards interrupted, except by the Great Divider of kindred

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minds and loving hearts, and which was of considerable service to mankind.

In 1751, Black removed to Edinburgh to complete the course of his medical studies. At this time, the mode of action of lithotriptic medicines, but particularly lime water, in alleviating certain diseases, divided the opinions of professors and practitioners. This subject attracted the attention of Black, and it appears from some of his memorandums, that he at first held the opinion, that the causticity of alkalis was owing to the igneous matter which they derive from quick lime. Having prosecuted his experiments on magnesia, this grand secret of nature, which for ever will be associated with his name, was laid open to him. He perceived that the acrimony of these substances was not owing to their combination with igneous particles; that it was their peculiar property; and that they lost this property, and became mild, by combining with a certain portion of air, to which he gave the name of FIXED AIR; because it was fixed or become solid in the substances, into the composition of which it entered."

This inquiry, which Dr. Black brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and which forms one of those valuable discoveries that have immortalized his name as a scientific discoverer, produced a complete revolution in Chemistry. It not only involved in it a principle which was applicable to a large class of truths, but it showed to the chemical inquirer an altogether new principle of investigation, by which many important phenomena could at once be detected, which had heretofore escaped the notice of the most diligent and enthusiastic investigators. The following is the lucid explanation of the nature of Dr. Black's discovery, appended by a scientific Chemist to a recent biographical sketch of that eminent philosopher:—

"The explanation current at the time arose out of the peculiar views then universally entertained, in reference

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to the combination of heat with matter. In those days the Chemists were of the sect of fire-worshippers. They had raised an altar to a certain hypothetical Fire-essence, or as they named it, Phlogiston, and with its help they could unveil every mystery. This faith had arisen in the close of the preceding century, and rapidly spreading, had banished or swallowed up all that was orthodox in the older creeds. Having no foundation of truth to rest upon, like all false systems, it had met new difficulties by multiplying its dogmas; and these, having no centre of unity or coherence, had diverged into endless doctrines, contradictory and jarring, so that in the end no one knew very clearly the exact faith, or even object of faith of his brother, though all were loud in the praises of Phlogiston, and invoked its aid in every difficulty.

In the early days of Black, this system had as good as reached perfection, its supporters having fully succeeded in explaining every phenomenon in exactly the wrong way. They unawares read the page of nature backwards, and, as it were, reversed each material picture, all the while diligently proclaiming that the seamed canvass was the painted side.

To these unconscious proficients in the art of proving 'the worse the better reason,' the causticity of lime was a simple matter. A piece of chalk or marble, (*i. e.* mild lime,) when heated intensely in a furnace, as in a common lime-kiln, became caustic and corrosive in the highest degree. And no wonder, for while roasting in the flame, it had been imbibing at every pore the heat around it, and finally came out saturated with the essence of fire. Well then might it burn flesh and dissolve calculi. This same caustic lime, boiled with mild potass or soda, lost causticity whilst the alkali acquired it; the case was clear: the lime had handed over the fiery essence to the alkali, and had in consequence become mild and cool again.

This was the doctrine young Black himself believed,

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when he entered on the inquiry, and we find him trying to catch, or arrest, the fire in its transit from the lime, but failing to do so, he looked for the truth in another direction, and solved the difficulty.

He began by an appeal to the balance. He weighed the chalk, before and after its calcination in the furnace, and ascertained that, during this process, it always suffered a great loss in weight. Now it was clear that if the chalk had been absorbing heat all the while, it should have emerged from the furnace heavier by the added weight of the heat absorbed, if heat possess weight; or if heat be imponderable, then its weight should have remained unaltered; but it was always greatly lessened. It was now manifest that the loss of mildness was accompanied by a corresponding loss of something ponderable, some material substance therefore which might be arrested and examined. Black caught this something ponderable, and showed that it was an elastic fluid, an air or gas, which, as it had been evolved from a state of solidity, he called, as we have already seen, fixed air, and which he showed, when restored to the burned lime, gave it back all its original mildness. Where the soda had become caustic, by boiling with lime, which it rendered mild, it was not in virtue of a transference of heat or its essence from the lime to the soda, but of fixed air from the soda to the lime. It was the presence of the fixed air that made all the difference between mild and caustic earths and alkalis; mild lime was lime *plus* fixed air, caustic lime was lime *minus* fixed air.

These results were published by Black, in his inaugural treatise. This essay was remarkable, not only for the interest of its subject, but likewise for the closeness and logical beauty of its reasoning. It has been said of it, 'that, excepting the Optics of Newton, there is not a finer model for philosophical investigation.' Nor must its value, in an historical point of view, be measured

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merely by the amount of new truth which it added to the science of the period. In so far as it unfolded the cause of causticity in lime, it apparently supplied the explanation of a single difficulty, which was not so striking as to awaken great interest in its solution. But in so doing, it must be remembered, it showed, by a most pertinent example, in what manner the problems of Chemistry should be attacked, and effected the most beneficial change in the method of experimenting in use at the time. The Chemistry of the seventeenth century, like the older astronomy with the earth in the centre and the sun moving round it, was not merely untrue, but was exactly the reverse of true. The Chemists of that day pronounced a body to gain where it lost, and where it lost they believed it had gained. They looked as it were not at nature herself, but at her inverted image in the Camera Obscura of their own darkened understanding. Black, by his appeal to the balance, made use of a Camera Lucida, which set things on their feet again. He was not the Copernicus of the new Chemistry, Lavoisier was that. Black's merit was like that of one who should have shown in opposition to previous belief, that a moon moved round a planet, and not the planet round its satellite; but to have done this much was a great matter, and it has been singularly forgotten in estimating the claims of this philosopher. It must now be acknowledged that it was Black who first convinced the Chemist that the triumphs of this science were to be achieved, not so much by the discovery of new and complicated instruments, as by the wise use of one of the oldest and simplest of them, the *balance*."

It was not, however, by the just application of the balance alone that Black's important discoveries proved the commencement of a new era in Chemistry. He had begun the new work of which Hales had done little more than vaguely indicate the existence. He had evolved an

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elastic gas from a mass of solid matter, and had thereby exhibited the first of that series of phenomena in the chemistry of the gases, with many of which the most superficial student of Chemistry is now familiar; and which are now in daily use in our common manufactories. Bleaching, dyeing, glass-painting, plating, plumbing, gilding, and a hundred other branches of our useful manufactures are indebted to the discovery of the nature and property of the gases, and the application of their peculiar properties to different purposes in the useful arts. Our streets, too, and our houses and warerooms are illuminated by the invisible *air* which is let loose from the coal, and sent by one of the simplest processes wandering through every street and alley of the town, up stairs and down stairs, supplying all with a brilliant and economic light, with little cost and no trouble.

It is greatly to be regretted that the attention of Dr. Black was abstracted from his favourite pursuit by numerous encroachments on his time, arising from the circumstances in which he was placed. His Inaugural Thesis, which manifested so much scientific acumen, and produced such important results on the whole future history of the science of Chemistry, was composed on the occasion of his receiving the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Edinburgh, on the completion of his academical studies, in his twenty-sixth year. Here, therefore, we have a remarkable example of early genius displaying itself in an entirely new path, and subverting all the preconceived opinions and theories of his most eminent predecessors and contemporaries, at a period of life when most men are only beginning to gird themselves for such ambitious attempts. All the merits that are now so apparent in his admirable thesis were only very partially appreciated at the time of its publication. Nevertheless a very creditable acknowledgment of his great and original merits was almost immediately ac-

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corded. Dr. Cullen, under whom Black had pursued his chemical studies in Glasgow, was at that very time promoted to the Chair of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh, and Dr. Black was at once selected as the fittest to succeed him in the Glasgow professorship. It is indeed affirmed on very credible evidence, that the young student of science might then have stepped at once into the more important professorship of the Edinburgh University, but he generously refused to allow himself to be put in nomination in opposition to his old friend and teacher, Dr. Cullen.

Ten years of Dr. Black's valuable life were accordingly spent in Glasgow under circumstances little calculated to advance the scientific discoveries he had so well begun. With a desire, as it would appear, to increase his emoluments, and thereby render his position an adequate and worthy post for one of such high abilities, first the Chair of Anatomy, and afterwards that of Medicine, was conjoined with the Chemical professorship, and the attention of Black was thereby diverted for years from the favourite and congenial pursuits of chemical inquiry, in order to enable him, with credit and satisfaction to himself, to lecture on these unwonted subjects of observation. In addition to these distracting studies, his Medical professorship gradually involved him in extensive practice as a physician, to the extension of which his own amiable disposition and engaging manners largely contributed. The consequence of all this was, that after arriving thus early at the very threshold of many important discoveries, involved in the truths which he had published in his Inaugural Thesis, these were left to be prosecuted by Cavendish and others of his eminent contemporaries and successors.

Distracting, however, as these complicated duties were, Dr. Black did not altogether neglect his favourite science, although he left others to follow up the first tract of dis-

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covery that he had indicated. His most intimate friend at Glasgow was the celebrated Dr. Adam Smith, then Professor of Moral Philosophy in the same University, a man who in many respects closely resembled the amiable and benevolent young Chemical professor. He is described as "marked by a peculiar simplicity and sensibility, an incorruptible integrity, and the strictest delicacy and correctness of manners." There can be no doubt that these two eminent men must have exercised a mutual and very beneficial influence on each other, by the intimacy that thus sprung up between them.

Although the important examination of fixed air was left by Black to be prosecuted by others, his mind appears to have been all along occupied in the consideration of some of those great and significant relations between heat and matter, which he had been the first to detect and to reveal. "Curious enough," says a scientific writer in treating of the subject, "the very man who, a few years before, had shown the falsity of the current belief in the combination of heat with certain forms of matter, was now to gain distinction by proving that such a doctrine was true, in relation to *all* matter," though in quite a different sense from that which the universally adopted theories of the age implied. It is on these remarkable discoveries, indeed, that the reputation of Black mainly depends, and such is their importance and value that they still reflect an honour on the University and on the country where they were brought to maturity. The following interesting account of this important contribution to modern science is furnished by Professor Robison in a biographical memoir prefixed to Dr. Black's lectures:—

"It seems to have been between the year 1759 and 1763, that his speculations concerning HEAT, which had long occupied his thoughts, were brought to maturity. And when it is considered by what simple experiments,

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by what familiar observations, Dr. Black illustrated the laws of fluidity and evaporation, it appears wonderful that they had not long before been observed and demonstrated. They are, however, less obvious than might at first sight be imagined, and to have a distinct and clear conception of those seemingly simple processes of nature, required consideration and reflection. If a piece of wood, a piece of lead, and a piece of ice, are placed in a temperature much inferior to that of the body, and if we touch the piece of wood with the hand, it feels cold; if we touch the piece of lead, it feels colder still; but the piece of ice feels colder than either. Now, the first suggestion of sense is, that we receive cold from the wood; that we receive more from the lead; and most of all from the ice; and that the ice continues to be a source of cold till the whole be melted. But an inference precisely the contrary to all this is made by him whose attention and reflection has been occupied with this subject. He infers that the wood takes a little heat from the hand, but is soon heated so much as to take no more. The lead takes more heat before it be as much satiated; and the ice continues to feel equally cold, and to carry off heat as fast as in the first moment, till the whole be melted. This, then, was the inference made by Dr. Black.

Boerhaave has recorded an interesting observation by Fahrenheit, namely, that water would sometimes grow considerably colder than melting snow without freezing, and would freeze in a moment when shaken or disturbed, and in the act of freezing give out many degrees of heat. Founded on this observation, it appears that Dr. Black entertained some vague notion or conjecture, that the heat which was received by the ice during its conversion into water, was not lost, but was still contained in the water. And he hoped to verify this conjecture by making a comparison of the time required to raise a pound of water one degree in its temperature, with the time re-

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quired to melt a pound of ice, both being supposed to receive the heat equally fast. And that he might ascertain how much heat was extricated during congelation, he thought of comparing the time required to depress the temperature of a pound of water one degree, with the time required for freezing it entirely. The plan of this series of experiments occurred to him during the summer season. But for want of ice, which he could not then procure, he had no opportunity of putting them to the test. He therefore waited impatiently for the winter. The winter arrived, and the decisive experiment was performed in the month of December 1761. From this experiment it appeared that as much heat was taken up by the ice, during its liquefaction, as would have raised the water 140 degrees in its temperature, and on the other hand, that exactly the same quantity of heat was given out during the congelation of the water. But this experiment, the result of which Dr. Black eagerly longed for, only informed him how much heat was absorbed by the ice during liquefaction, was retained by the water while it remained fluid, and was again emitted by it in the process of freezing. But his mind was deeply impressed with the truth of the doctrine, by reflecting on the observations that presented themselves when a frost or a thaw happened to prevail. The hills are not at once cleared of snow during the sunshine of the brightest winter day, nor are the ponds suddenly covered with ice during a single frosty night. Much heat is absorbed and fixed in the water during the melting of the snow, and on the other hand, while the water is changed into ice, much heat is extricated. During a thaw, the thermometer sinks when it is removed from the air, and placed in the melting snow; and during severe frost, it rises when plunged into freezing water. In the first case, the snow receives heat; and in the last, the water allows the heat to escape again. These were fair and unquestionable in-

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ferences, and now they appear obvious and easy. But although many ingenious and acute philosophers had been engaged in the same investigations, and had employed the same facts in their disquisitions, those obvious inferences were entirely overlooked. It was reserved for Dr. Black to remove the veil which hid this mystery of nature, and by this important discovery, to establish an era in the progress of Chemical science, one of the brightest, perhaps, which has yet occurred in its history."

To these observations of Professor Robison we shall add the still more lucid explanation of a writer in the British Quarterly Review, from whose biographical sketch of Black we have already quoted:—"All are familiar," he remarks, "with the three conditions in which bodies exist at the earth's surface, those namely of solidity, liquidity, and gaseity. Many substances, such as water, can assume the whole three according to the temperature to which they are exposed, and it must have been a very old observation, at least in cold countries, that ice, if heated, melts into water, and that water, if heated, vaporizes into steam. It was likewise supposed, till Black proved the contrary, that a mere slight addition of heat to ice, sufficed to convert it into water, and that a correspondingly small addition of heat to water, converted it into steam. But if these views had been true, a single day's sunshine in winter would deluge us with torrents of water, from the snow changed into liquid by a slight elevation in its temperature. Few draughts would be more costly than a cup of tea, and few undertakings more perilous than to attempt to prepare it, for a kettleful of water a second after beginning to boil would explode into steam with the violence of gunpowder. Ice or snow, on the contrary, it is well known, melts with extreme slowness, neither is the water resulting from its liquefaction, in the slightest degree warmer than the ice from which it has come. In like manner it takes a long

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time to vaporize any considerable quantity of water, and the steam into which it is changed is no hotter than the boiling water from which it is coming.

Black had long suspected, that the heat which appeared in these familiar phenomena to liquefy and vaporize bodies without elevating their temperature, was not lost, but had entered into the liquids and vapours, and might be recovered from them. He succeeded by exceedingly simple, but at the same time decisive and incontrovertible experiments, in establishing that it was so. It is now universally acknowledged that no solid can become liquid, or any liquid a vapour or gas, without entering into a new relation to heat such as Black described. If we consider heat as a material substance, we express this new relation most simply by saying that when a solid melts, or a liquid vaporizes, a certain amount of heat combines with it: every liquid being as it were a compound of heat and the solid which yielded it: every vapour a compound of heat and the liquid from which it was evolved. The heat which thus liquefies or vaporizes a body, does not increase its warmth, but is entirely spent in changing its form; hence the water which flows from melting ice, is as cold as the ice, and steam has exactly the temperature of boiling water, although the latter had to combine with a great amount of heat before it could become steam. The heat which is thus hidden or concealed within liquids and vapours so that it does not affect our sensations, and has no influence on the thermometer, Black named latent or insensible heat. Its office is not, like that of sensible heat, to alter the temperature of a body, but to throw it into, and maintain it in, a new condition. The reader will see at a glance how close a relation there is between the latency of heat in matter and the existence of gases. Betwixt gases and vapours there is no essential distinction. A vapour is a temporary gas, a gas a permanent vapour, and every aerial body must be looked upon, as owing its

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gaseous form to the presence within it of a large amount of insensible or latent heat, of which if we should deprive it, it would become a liquid or a solid. It is one of the triumphs of our own day to have established this. Many of the so called permanently elastic gases, among the rest Black's own fixed air, which we now name carbonic acid, have been cooled into liquids and frozen into snows. So also, the combination of gases with each other or with solids, is frequently attended with the evolution of much heat. Black's doctrine supplies an explanation of this in many cases. When oxygen and hydrogen unite with each other much heat is evolved. One cause of this undoubtedly is, that they form by their union a liquid, (namely water,) and all the heat which was latent in them as gases, becomes in consequence sensible, and affects our sensations and the thermometer. So also, much of the intense heat which is generated during the combustion of phosphorus in oxygen gas, is owing to the latter abandoning its latent heat in the act of combining with the combustible to form a solid compound."

Many were the important results to science and the arts which flowed from this masterly demonstration of the nature and operations of heat, and the views Black thereby formed of the phenomena of the boiling, condensation, and vaporization of water. The views which he then made public in his lectures were listened to with peculiar interest by the no less celebrated James Watt, and to the theories which he deduced from them we owe the working out of the grand practical application of steam power, by means of which so astonishing a revolution has been effected on the age.

In 1766, the Chemical chair of the University of Edinburgh became vacant, owing to the transference of Dr. Cullen to that of medicine, for which he was much better adapted, and Dr. Black once more succeeded to his place, and continued to fulfil the duties of Chemical professor

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there to the end of his days. For thirty years after, Dr. Black continued one of the foremost among the circle of eminent men that then made the University of Edinburgh famous throughout Europe by their genius and writings. As a public teacher he is described by those who still remember him as constituting the most complete model of a Chemical lecturer ever witnessed. His style was singularly lucid, his lectures were easy and familiar, while the simplicity and elegance of his experiments excited the admiration of his numerous pupils. "His voice," says one of his biographers, "in lecturing, was low and fine, and his articulation so distinct that it was perfectly well heard by a large audience. His discourse was remarkable for plainness and perspicuity; all his illustrations, whether by experiment or by reference to the processes of nature, were quite apposite; his hearers rested with the most entire confidence on his conclusions, and even the most illiterate could not mistake his sentiments."

A far more lively description, however, is furnished elsewhere of the eloquence and peculiar grace of manner by which this great master in science rendered himself one of the most successful teachers that ever wooed the young student to the love of science. Such was his success that Chemistry, which had heretofore been regarded as one of the mysteries of the apothecary's laboratory, became a fashionable study in Scotland, and a necessary branch of the education of a gentleman. The following enthusiastic description is from the pen of one of Black's most illustrious pupils, Lord Brougham, in whom the seductive eloquence and perspicuity of the great Chemist excited a love of science altogether unwonted in a student of the dry mysteries of legal knowledge. He remarks, in his Lives of Men of Letters and Science, "It remains to consider him as a teacher; and certainly nothing could be more admirable than the manner in which for forty

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years he performed this useful and dignified office. His style of lecturing was as nearly perfect as can well be conceived; for it had all the simplicity which is so entirely suited to scientific discourse, while it partook largely of the elegance which characterized all he said or did. The publication of his lectures has conveyed an accurate idea of the purely analytical order in which he deemed it best to handle the subject with a view to instruction, considering this as the most likely to draw and to fix the learner's attention, to impress his memory, and to show him both the connexion of the theory with the facts, and the steps by which the principles were originally ascertained. The scheme of the lectures may thence be apprehended—the execution imperfectly; for the diction was evidently, in many instances, extemporaneous, the notes before the teacher furnishing him with little more than the substance, especially of those portions which were connected with experiments. But still less can the reader rise from the perusal to any conception of the manner. Nothing can be more suited to the occasion; it was perfect philosophical calmness; there was no effort, it was an easy and a graceful conversation. The voice was low, but perfectly distinct and audible through the whole of a large hall crowded in every part with mutely attentive listeners; it was never forced at all, any more than were the motions of the hands, but it was anything rather than monotonous. Perfect elegance as well as repose was the phrase by which every hearer and spectator naturally, and as if by common consent, described the whole delivery. The accidental circumstance of the great teacher's aspect, I hope I may be pardoned for stopping to note, while endeavouring to convey the idea of a philosophic discoverer. His features were singularly graceful, full of intelligence, but calm as suited his manner and his speech. His high forehead and sharp temples were slightly covered, when I knew him, with hair of a

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snow-white hue, and his mouth gave a kindly as well as most intelligent expression to his whole features.

The reader who has known the pleasure of science will forgive me if at the distance of half a century I love to linger over these recollections, and to dwell on the delight which I well remember thrilled me as we heard this illustrious sage detail, after the manner I have feebly attempted to portray, the steps by which he made his discoveries, illustrating them with anecdotes sometimes recalled to his mind by the passages of the moment, and giving their demonstration by performing before us the many experiments which had revealed to him first the most important secrets of nature. Next to the delight of having actually stood by him when his victory was gained, we found the exquisite gratification of hearing him simply, most gracefully, in the most calm spirit of philosophy, with the most perfect modesty, recount his difficulties, and how they were overcome; open to us the steps by which he had successfully advanced from one part to another of his brilliant course; go over the same ground, as it were, in our presence, which he had for the first time trod so many long years before; hold up perhaps the very instruments he had then used, and act over again the same part before our eyes which had laid the deep and broad foundations of his imperishable renown. Not a little of this extreme interest certainly belonged to the accident that he had so long survived the period of his success—that we knew there sat in our presence the man now in his old age reposing under the laurels won in his early youth. But take it altogether, the effect was such as cannot well be conceived. I have heard the greatest understandings of the age giving forth their efforts in its most eloquent tongues, but I should without hesitation prefer, for mere intellectual gratification, (though aware how much of it is derived from association,) to be once more allowed the privilege which I in those days enjoyed

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of being present while the first philosopher of his age was the historian of his own discoveries, and be an eye-witness of those experiments by which he had formerly made them, once more performed with his own hands."

With the exposition of his great doctrine of the latency of heat, Black's practical labours as an original Chemist closed. Thenceforth he withdrew from the field of Chemical research, though his great doctrine continued to afford him scope for many valuable and original speculations, which have been fully appreciated by his successors. To this great mind the scientific truths he made known seem to have brought along with them an ample reward. He was almost devoid of that ambition which spurs so many men on to the accomplishment of great works, and incites them to descend into the arena of personal controversy to claim the laurels they have won. With placid contentment, and perfect tranquillity of mind, he beheld others following out the principles he had established to their numerous important results, and even saw his own discoveries laid claim to by others without even suffering the injustice to disturb his equanimity or to provoke him to the exertion of self-defence. The extreme delicacy of his health had somewhat to do with this; but a man of an irritable temperament, or even of less amiability and gentleness than the great Chemist, would have exhausted his feeble frame at the outset, by the vehement struggles of the mind to accomplish self-imposed labours coeval with its powers.

Dr. Black never married, yet he manifested an exceedingly sociable and affectionate disposition. He had generally some of his female relatives residing with him, all of whom were warmly attached to him, and delighted in his society. He was frugal and simple in his tastes, yet liberal and generous in all his pecuniary dealings, and he appears to have left a large sum of money at his death, chiefly owing to the same gentle and unambitious tastes

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we have described, which precluded him from any of those extravagant and ostentatious displays of wealth by which it is so frequently squandered to gratify the foolish pride of weaker minds.

The chief friends of Dr. Black were Smith, Hume, Carlyle, Home, and Hutton. The last was closely connected with him in philosophical pursuits, as well as in the bonds of private friendship—notwithstanding that there were some striking points of difference between the two men. To these were afterwards added Robison, Playfair, and Dugald Stewart. In such society his life wore away, cheered by all the social endearments of friendship and elevated social intercourse, and unembittered by a pang of disappointed ambition or jealous rivalry. In the latter days of Dr. Black, he sunk into a low state of health, and only preserved himself from the shocks of the weather in this variable climate by a degree of care and abstemiousness rarely surpassed even by the most devout Indian Brahmin. Thus he spun out the thread of life to the last fibre. "It was his generous and manly wish that he might never live to be a burden to his friends; and never was the wish more completely gratified. On the 26th of November, 1799, and in the seventy-first year of his age, he expired, without any convulsion, shock, or stupor, to announce or retard the approach of death. Being at table with his usual fare—some bread, a few prunes, and a measured quantity of milk, diluted with water, and having the cup in his hand when the last stroke of the pulse was to be given, he had set it down upon his knees, which were joined together, and kept it steady with his hand in the manner of a person perfectly at ease, and in this attitude expired, without spilling a drop, and without a writhe in his countenance; as if an *experiment* had been required, to show to his friends the facility with which he departed. His servant opened the door to tell him that some one had left

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his name but getting no answer, stepped about half-way towards him, and seeing him sitting in that easy posture, supporting his basin of milk with one hand, he thought that he had dropped asleep, which he had sometimes seen happen after his meals. The man went back and shut the door, but before he got down stairs, some anxiety that he could not account for made him return, and look again at his master. Even then, he was satisfied, after coming pretty near, and turned to go away, but again returned, and coming quite close, found his master without life." As at the evening of life's long summer day, the gentle Chemist had closed his eyes for the last time on earthly things, and tranquilly resigned himself to death.

Dr. Black is said to have displayed an almost total want of fancy; it arose, however, from no absence of refined taste, or delicate appreciation of beauty. We owe to it undoubtedly that strictly accurate and predetermined pursuit of definite truths, by which he accomplished such great things for science, and which makes us regret that so much of his life should have been passed in the quiet retirement of the studious invalid's reflective ease. He appears to have been a man of remarkable self-reliance and independence of others, when we consider his amiable and sociable disposition. He possessed, in a striking degree, the means of happiness altogether within himself. His scientific discoveries brought to himself their own reward, with which he was perfectly satisfied. His tasteful relaxations were equally under his own control. He could share them with others, or derive from them ample enjoyment alone, and he seems to have been equally happy when surrounded by the delightful circle of friends whom his endearing qualities attracted to him, or when enjoying his own solitary reflections. Scarcely another instance could be selected in the whole range of biography of eminent men, of a mind equally gifted with great powers, and yet so thoroughly balanced as ever to be

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under such strict control of reason and virtue. He has well been pronounced the most amiable of men.

No more striking contrast to this great philosopher could possibly be selected than the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. Born in circumstances not greatly inferior to those of Black, Davy had to follow in the paths of science, surmounting some obstacles by his own energy and enthusiasm, which the academic course selected by the elder Black for his son in some degree removed from the latter. After all, however, too much has been made by the biographers of Davy of the difficulties he encountered and overcame. Inventive genius has no great right to boast of triumph merely because it has its own weapons and tools to forge. The mind that can evoke the new creation need not grudge the small additional effort which such inventive skill requires. When we consider the extraordinary intuitive genius afterwards displayed by Davy, in which he sometimes almost seemed instinctively to arrive at great truths, we find far less manifestation of it than might have been looked for in early life. The chief feature that appears in him up to his thirtieth year, is great energy, and a bold and resolute perseverance, affording proof of powerful faculties, capable, when well directed, accomplishing important results. Altogether different, however, from Black, we find him owing his first success in London to superficial and showy accomplishments, and even incurring the risk of being borne away by the seductive follies of fashionable society, and sacrificing all loftier aims to its fickle plaudits.

The position occupied by Davy as lecturer at the Royal Institution, while it exposed him to such temptations, amply atoned for them by the abundant facilities he there found at his command for his own legitimate pursuits. There he had ample apparatus of the most costly and perfect kind at his service; an income sufficient for all reasonable wants; assistants provided for

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him, books at his hand, and his time almost entirely at his own disposal. What more could Black have desired, except health, to make use of so noble an opportunity? and that too Davy abundantly enjoyed. No scientific student ever possessed ampler opportunities of success, and few have more nobly acknowledged their possession. Our space, however, will not allow us to follow him through the various steps of his successive additions to science. In 1801 he made his first important discovery, in reference to the nature of galvanic action, and thenceforward he continued to make frequent and valuable additions to scientific truth, enlarging the bounds of human knowledge and power, and helping to alleviate some of the evils that attended on the humble mechanic's toil. In 1820 he was unanimously chosen to succeed Sir Joseph Banks in the Chair of the Royal Society, and this he continued honourably to fill till 1827, when failing health at length compelled him to resign it. To the recreations of his active mind during those periods when illness compelled him to relax from his favourite study, we owe his "*Salmonia*," and the singular posthumous work, entitled "*Consolations in Travel; or, the Last Days of a Philosopher.*" Wandering, an invalid, through the magnificent ruins of the Colosseum at Rome, he there meets with a Spirit who conducts him through the whole planetary system. The dying philosopher has amused his last hours with many strange, and some exceedingly lively and poetical fancies. His intellect retained all its earlier energy and power, but the debilitated frame was refusing longer to be its servant. He spent the winter and spring of 1829 at Rome, and returning home in the beginning of summer, a fatal apoplectic shock suddenly cut him off, at Geneva. He died on the 29th of May, 1829, in the fifty-first year of his age, leaving behind him a reputation that needs no panegyric to add to its brilliancy.

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THE INVENTIVE FACULTY.

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St. Paul's Cathedral.
Sir Christopher Wren, page 317.

THE INVENTIVE FACULTY.

CHAPTER I.—SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN.

IN selecting the great Architect who rebuilt modern London, as a striking exemplification of Early Genius, we have classed him foremost among those who have eminently displayed the Inventive Faculty. He was in truth a man remarkable for the variety of his acquirements, and the great resources

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of his mind. He possessed good opportunities in early life for the acquirement of knowledge, and of these he abundantly availed himself. Wren was born at the Rectory of East Knoyle, Wilts, on the 20th of October, 1632. He was the son of Dr. Christopher Wren, chaplain in ordinary to Charles I., and Dean of Windsor; and his uncle, Dr. Matthew Wren, was successively Bishop of Hereford, Norwich, and Ely. His father appears to have been a man of learning and of considerable taste, so that he early acquired, under his care, a keen relish for scientific and literary pursuits. There is good reason also for believing that it was from the tastes and peculiar studies of Dr. Wren that the youthful scholar first learned the rudiments of architectural knowledge, and received that peculiar bent that afterwards led to the devotion of his genius to such a pursuit. Dr. Wren possessed considerable skill in the architecture, and a specimen of his abilities, consisting of a series of designs for a building intended to have been erected by the Queen of Charles I., is still preserved in the library of the Earls of Clarendon.

Young Wren needed little other stimulus than the opportunities afforded by his father's tastes and habits of study to induce him to devote himself sedulously to the acquirement of knowledge. One of his biographers remarks of him:—"Though in his childhood of weak bodily constitution Wren was of most precocious mind, and that, too, as youthful genius most rarely displays itself—not in poetic fancy and feeling, but in the abstruser paths of science and philosophy. In fact it almost partakes of the marvellous when we are told that, at the age of thirteen, he invented an astronomical instrument, a pneumatic engine, and another instrument of use in gnomonics. These inventions probably served no other end than that of causing him to be regarded as a prodigy; and the fame thus acquired no doubt helped to procure for him at Oxford, where he was entered as a gentleman commoner at

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Wadham College in his fourteenth year, the notice of Dr. Wilkins and Seth Wood, Savilian professor of astronomy. A philosopher and mathematician of the age of sixteen was a phenomenon: and even before then he had been distinguished by his proficiency in anatomy, and had been employed by Sir Charles Scarborough as his demonstrating assistant. While at Oxford, he associated with Hooke (whom he assisted in his 'Micrographia') and other scientific men, whose meetings laid the foundation of the future Royal Society. In 1653, he was elected a fellow of All Souls College, Oxford."

Wren was indeed one of those men of such great natural gifts and eminent acquirements that he could have filled some of the first offices of his age with equal credit and honour to that which he has acquired as the architect of London after the Restoration. The period at which he undertook such professional duties was one in which the art had brought to a final close the mediæval architecture which had for centuries moulded the architectural skill of England into forms of rarest beauty. With the Reformation new wants and wishes sprung up. Architecture became, for a time, a lawless system of patchwork, in which ignorance of the old art, and the lack of inventive genius to supersede it by a style adapted to the new order of things, are equally apparent. It is fortunate that such a genius was found to direct the work at this important crisis. Inigo Jones, his celebrated predecessor, was employed to decorate the west front of the ancient cathedral of St. Paul's, which he did by superadding to it a Corinthian colonnade. For this he was extolled by his contemporaries as having produced a work altogether surpassing the designs of the great architects of the middle ages; and when the more modern edifice of Wren had replaced old St. Paul's with its Corinthian colonnade, the profane wits of Charles's court applied to it the language of mourning with which the Jews gave expression to their thoughts

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when they compared the second Temple with the glory of that which had preceded it. In our own day, with whatever admiration we may regard the illustrious name of Inigo Jones, his addition to the ancient Gothic cathedral could only be regarded as an incongruous absurdity. Such was the state of the art by which Wren has attained his chief celebrity, at the period of his beginning to practise it. But it was not in architecture alone that he excelled, or even that he was chiefly known to his contemporaries. By the time he was twenty-four years of age, his name was familiar to the learned of Europe by many ingenious theories, as well as by valuable inventions and improvements. In August, 1657, he was appointed to the Chair of Astronomy at Gresham College, London; and, three years after, he resigned this honourable post, on being nominated to the Savilian professorship at Oxford. He was indeed one of the most able mathematicians of the age, and probably only surpassed, among his contemporaries, by the greatest of all mathematicians, Sir Isaac Newton.

It was owing to the great reputation which Wren enjoyed among the learned men of his day, and to his well-known scientific skill, far more than to any celebrity attained by him for a knowledge of architecture that he was appointed, in 1661, assistant to Sir John Denham, the surveyor-general, and was commissioned, about two years after, to report on the state of St. Paul's cathedral, with a view to the remodelling of the whole building into a uniformity with the famed colonnade of Inigo Jones. The venerable cathedral on which Inigo Jones had already exercised his perverse ingenuity, had suffered by fire, and been still farther injured by the ignorance of its restorers. The lateral pressure of an unskilfully constructed roof had already thrown its massive but time-worn walls out of the perpendicular; and the whole building appeared to be hastening to decay in defiance of its patchwork restorers.

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Wren, after a careful survey of the whole, advised that it should be entirely removed, and rebuilt on a new plan; suggesting, however, the accomplishment of this by degrees, so that the old work should be gradually removed, piece by piece, as the new erection rose to take its place. Popular feeling and prejudice were strongly in favour of the preservation of the ancient edifice, insomuch so that a superstitious veneration linked the prosperity of the city with the continuation of the great tower of old St. Paul's; both of them being destined, according to the popular creed, to fall together. The clergy were little less prejudiced, influenced in part by an unwillingness to sanction any work that threatened to interrupt, for a considerable time, the only cathedral service of the metropolitan church, then so recently restored; and the Government looked with coldness on a scheme that must have involved a vast amount of outlay for its execution. Dissensions, discussions, and endless delays ensued; and while deans, commissioners, prebends, and citizens were squabbling together, and postponing indefinitely the accomplishment of Wren's comprehensive plan, the Great Fire swept with desolating fury over the metropolis, and the demolition of the ancient cathedral was accelerated by its ravages.

The scientific skill of Wren, and his artistic genius, were once more called into requisition, not only for the restoration of the Cathedral Church, but for the rebuilding of the whole ruined capital. The greater number of those to whom the oversight was intrusted still clamoured for the restoration of the ancient church, although its aged walls had been previously enfeebled by repeated injuries and unskilful alterations, and were then tottering almost in ruins. In opposition to Wren's reiterated assurances of the impossibility of preserving the venerable fabric, much time and labour and vast sums of money were expended in the vain attempt to prop up its crumbling walls,

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until at length the fall of some of the newest portions of them compelled the most obstinate of Wren's opponents to concur in his original proposition. The demolition of the ancient fabric afforded opportunity for the play of Wren's scientific knowledge and engineering skill. By various ingenious devices, he saved the labour of many months; and when thwarted—as he frequently was, by ignorant or jealous officials—he was always ready with some new device with which to effect the purpose he had in view. The following is a description of one of these ingenious applications of scientific knowledge:—"In order that the rubbish and old materials might not hinder the setting out of the foundations, for the purpose of proceeding with the works, Sir Christopher constructed scaffolds high enough to extend his lines over the heaps that were in the way; and thereby caused perpendiculars to be fixed upon the points below for his various walls and piers, from lines drawn carefully upon the level plan of the scaffold. Thus he proceeded, gaining every day more and more room, till he came to the middle tower that formerly carried the lofty spire. The ruins of this tower being nearly two hundred feet high, the labourers were afraid to work above, which induced him to facilitate the labour by the use of gunpowder. To perform this work, he caused a hole to be dug, of about four feet wide, by the side of the north-west pier of the tower, in which was perforated a hole two feet square, reaching to the centre of the pier. In this he placed a small deal box containing eighteen pounds of gunpowder. To this box he affixed a hollow cane, which contained a quick match, reaching to the surface of the ground above; and along the ground a train of powder was laid with a match. The mine was then closed up, and exploded, while the philosophical architect waited with confidence the result of his experiment. This small quantity of powder not only lifted up the whole angle of the tower, with two great arches that

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rested upon it, but also two adjoining arches of the aisle, and the masonry above them. This it appeared to do in a slow but efficient manner, cracking the walls to the top, lifting visibly the whole weight about nine inches, which suddenly dropping, made a great heap of ruins in the place, without scattering or accident. It was half a minute before the heap already fallen opened in two or three places, and emitted smoke. By this successful experiment the force of gunpowder may be ascertained; eighteen pounds only of which lifted up a weight of more than three thousand tons, and saved the work of a thousand labourers. The fall of so great a weight from a height of two hundred feet, gave such a concussion to the ground, that the inhabitants round about took it for the shock of an earthquake."

The magnificent fabric, the foundations of which were secured by such labour, progressed, in defiance of numerous obstacles, and the great architect lived to see his design completed. A view of its noble west front and graceful dome forms the illustration at the head of this chapter; and exhibits one of the most beautiful architectural compositions of modern European art.

While this great work was progressing under the architect's surveillance, he was designing churches, theatres, and public buildings of every description, the immense variety and the scientific skill displayed in which are altogether astonishing. In the construction of the timberwork for roofs of great span, he has never been surpassed. His mathematical knowledge enabled him to proceed in designing them with perfect confidence, and the most admirable adaptation of his materials to the object in view. In this respect it has been affirmed by many competent judges, that the skill and science displayed in the timberwork of the dome of St. Paul's afford more indubitable evidence of his great genius even than the magnificent fabric for which it was designed.

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While these numerous works were progressing under Wren's direction, and from his own careful and elaborate designs, he still found leisure for taking an active part in the affairs of the Royal Society, and bringing before them many important views on scientific inquiries.

Sir Christopher Wren filled the office of Surveyor-General from the reign of Charles II. to the death of Queen Anne. During the whole of that long period of forty-nine years, his energies were actively employed in a series of works sufficient to have overtasked the powers of many men of ordinary mind. He retained, however, his full vigour to the last, withdrawing, when nearly at the age of ninety, from his official duties; and retiring in calm serenity of mind, to pass his closing days in retirement and peace. He was spared the pangs of a lingering dissolution, having been found, like the illustrious Scottish chemist Black, calmly reposing in his easy chair, having "slept the sleep that knows no waking." He died on the 25th of February, 1723, in the ninety-first year of his age. His remains are laid in the crypt of St. Paul's, and the organ screen is engraved with the only, but most appropriate inscription over his ashes:—"*Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.*" If thou askest for his monument, look around!

CHAPTER II

ARCHIBALD, EARL OF DUNDONALD.

THE Cochranes of Cochrane and Ochiltree, an old Scottish family of high descent, figure in the later incidents of Scottish history generally, as adherents to the ancient line of the Stuarts. In 1647, Sir William Cochrane of Cowden, for the zeal and fidelity with which he

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had served the king, was elevated to the rank of a baron in the Scottish peerage, by the title of Lord Cochrane of Dundonald. He served in the civil wars of the time with such zeal as subjected him to heavy forfeitures on account of his loyalty, when Cromwell assumed the sceptre which had been wrested from the unyielding hand of Charles I. In 1654, he only purchased his participation in the general act of pardon by a fine of £5000, an enormous penalty at that time; and his position continued to be precarious, and himself an object of jealousy and suspicion to the government, until the Restoration again placed him among the favourites of the throne. By Charles II. his fidelity to the cause of royalty was rewarded with the dignity of an earldom in the British Peerage, and thenceforward his descendants have continued to enjoy these honours, and to bear a prominent part in public affairs.

It is worthy of note, however, that this noble family did not permit their loyalty to the crown to betray them into a slavish obedience to the monarch's will. The second son of the first Earl of Dundonald was one of the foremost in opposing the tyranny of the ministers of Charles II., when, in the pride of power, they abused their high offices for the oppression of the most virtuous and well-deserving among the people. He was implicated in the Rye-House plot, for which the patriot Russell suffered, and took a prominent part in other bold attempts to expel the Stuarts from the throne, which they had once before forfeited by oppression, and had again showed themselves far more unworthy of, by the most unprincipled despotism and contempt of every sacred right of man. Sir John Cochrane, the active agent in these efforts for the disenthralment of the nation, narrowly escaped with his life at the foot of the gallows, the cupidity of the government happily proving even more importunate than their revenge.

Afterwards we find the descendants of the favourite of

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Charles I. distinguishing themselves chiefly in the naval battles of their country. The name of Admiral Cochrane may stand alongside even of those of Blake and Nelson, for deeds of heroism and self-devotion, as well as of skill in naval tactics. To a more peaceful, and still more honourable service rendered to the navy of England, we shall now, however, direct our attention. Archibald, ninth Earl of Dundonald, the descendant and representative of an ancestry thus distinguished in the annals of his country, displayed in early life a degree of energy and mental vigour, altogether unusual. In many instances of early genius we have to mourn the adverse circumstances which poverty and the want of education have raised up to retard or altogether prevent the adequate exercise of such great gifts. Here, however, the very advantages of wealth and rank were perhaps even more adverse to the right exercise of young Cochrane's inventive genius and powerful intellect, than the difficulties that a humble station in life would have compelled him to surmount. In accordance with the narrow, class notions of the period, he early entered active life as a cornet of dragoons, and wasted his fine intellect in the dull routine of the drill parade and military review. Disgusted with the monotonous duties incident to military life, he threw up his commission, and entered as a midshipman under his relation, Captain Stair Douglas. Here he speedily found a more congenial subject on which to employ his active mind, while the duties incident to navigation and the proper conduct of a ship of war, relieved, in some degree, the restless spirit that had rebelled against the dull formality of military parade. "While stationed as acting lieutenant in a vessel off the coast of Guinea, he had occasion to observe the liability of vessels to be rotted by the sea, which, in some cases, was so very great, that a few months was sufficient to render them not sea-worthy. He conceived the idea of laying them over with tar extracted

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from coal, a substance which was then little known, though now identified with the very idea of marine craft. The experiment was first tried in Holland, and found to answer all the purposes required. Being then tried upon a decked boat at the Nore, and found equally answerable, his lordship procured a patent of his invention for a short term, which was in 1785 changed for an act of Parliament, vesting it in him and his heirs for twenty years."

The preamble of this act recites, that, in the opinion of competent judges, the invention will be attended with the most beneficial consequences to the public, the process being simple, and the tar and pitch, made according to his patent, far surpassing any that had before been imported from foreign countries and being particularly useful in preserving ships' bottoms from worms and other sources of rapid decay, by which property of immense value had been lost to the nation, and both its navy and merchant fleets greatly crippled and diminished in value. Unfortunately, however, the Earl of Dundonald was destined to share in the disappointments as well as in the ingratitude and suffering which have, in so many cases, been the sole rewards of genius devoted to the advancement of the general good. Valuable as were the discoveries he had made, the advantage of which we are apt now to overlook from the very fact of their universal adoption, the application, at that very period, of copper sheathing for the protection of ships' bottoms, rendered the speculation not only abortive, but ruinous to the inventor, who had burdened all his estates in order to raise the necessary works. "Lord Cochrane had succeeded to the family honours in 1778. In 1785, he published two pamphlets—one entitled 'The Present State of the Manufacture of Salt explained,' the other, 'An Account of the Qualities and Uses of Coal Tar and Coal Varnish. He published also a treatise, showing the intimate connection between agriculture and chemistry, and in 1807

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he obtained a patent for improvements in spinning machinery. It unfortunately happened that his lordship's inventions, although all of them seemed to tend to the public good, proved unprofitable to himself. The latter half of his long life was, on this account, spent in embarrassments and privations, which may well excite our sympathy."

The suffering and neglect, indeed, which this gifted nobleman endured, entirely in consequence of his genius and generous zeal for the practical application of scientific discoveries, form one of the most melancholy pages in the history of unrequited merit. In him we may justly regard his noble descent and high station as affording an additional cause for sympathy, since it must have rendered the privations and sufferings he endured all the more intense. Many of the ingenious speculations of this noble votary of science have since been recognised as valuable practical contributions to public knowledge, although they were unappreciated at the time of their promulgation. In 1795, he published his treatise on the intimate relation between agriculture and chemistry. This, however, was regarded, at the time, as altogether chimerical and absurd, and probably furnished an additional ground for the contempt with which those who should have rewarded his labours in the cause of general knowledge and the public interest, were inclined to regard him. How different, however, is the view now entertained of such opinions. Chemical professorships have been established and endowed by our farmers; some of the most eminent men of science in Europe have devoted themselves to the elucidation of the principles of agricultural chemistry; and it has now become an indispensable part of the education of the farmer.

In 1808 he again contributed towards the resources of our national wealth by his inventive genius. He obtained a patent for improvements in spinning machinery the

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value of which has since been abundantly acknowledged, but which proved altogether valueless to their ingenious inventor. The following allusions to this unfortunate votary of science occur in an address to the Literary Fund Society in 1823, showing that some few were ready to appreciate his neglected claims to national gratitude during his own life-time:—"A man born in the high class of the old British peerage has devoted his acute and investigating mind solely to the prosecution of science; and his powers have prevailed in the pursuit. The discoveries effected by his scientific research, with its direction altogether to utility, have been in many instances beneficial to the community, and in many have been the sources of wealth to individuals. To himself alone they have been unprofitable; for with a superior disdain, or (if you please) a culpable disregard of the goods of fortune, he has scattered around him the produce of his intellect with a lavish and wild hand. Himself poor, he has made many rich, and though in the immediate neighbourhood of wealth, he has been doomed to suffer, through a long series of laborious years, the severities of want. In his advanced age he found an estimable woman, in poverty, it is true, like himself, but of unspotted character, and of high, though untitled family, to participate the calamity of his fortunes; and with her virtues and prudence, assisted by a small pension which she obtained from the benevolence of the crown, she threw a gleam of light over the dark decline of his day. She was soon, however, torn from him by death, and, with an infant whom she bequeathed to him, he was abandoned to destitution and distress."

This great man, thus favoured by nature, and born to rank and fortune, died in extreme poverty and neglect on the 1st of July, 1831, an exile from his ungrateful country, that thus allowed one of its benefactors to perish in his old age, being then in his eighty-third year, without

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any other recognition of his great abilities and his honourable zeal in the cause of science, and the improvement of the sources of national wealth, than the act of parliament which extended the duration of his first patent, although at that time hundreds of titled and untitled courtly sycophants, without either genius or merit to substantiate a claim to gratitude, were luxuriating in the pensions and preferments that interest and chicanery had purchased from men in power. Few lives of men of genius afford a more painful example of self-sacrificing labour, and unrequited merit, or of the strange vicissitudes of fortune that have most frequently chequered the lives of men of noble gifts, haunting them with misfortune and defeat from the cradle to the grave.

It is much to be feared that political rivalry, and the selfish schemes of interested partizans, contributed more than anything else to produce a systematic course of ingratitude and injustice towards a nobleman of whom his country has reason to be proud, no less than to be ashamed ;—to be proud that from among the representatives of the ancient British Peerage there sprung up one who, honourably bearing his share in the social duties that devolve on one elevated by birth to the rank of a nobleman, and partaking cheerfully in the vicissitudes and the hardships of the naval service during a period of war, was guided at the same time, by his genius and mental vigour to make valuable practical additions to the naval resources of the kingdom ;—to be ashamed that while in hundreds of cases political corruption encouraged a system that made rank and birth too often the sole ground for pensions and privileges, it yet left one of the most original minds among the whole privileged classes of British society to waste its great energies unrequited, and to turn them to the least possible account for the good of his country.

There is one inference that the thoughtful and intelligent reader will hardly fail to draw from this and similar

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examples of genius displayed among the highest ranks of society meeting with even more grudging acknowledgment than is accorded by the same class to such when it appears in the middle or lower ranks. The poet Byron affords a striking instance of genius united with rank and fortune, and reaping therefrom only hindrances and difficulties; such as have left him a melancholy example of a greatly gifted being, fitted to have become one of the teachers and benefactors of his age, and yet on whom we look back only in sad regret as to one who abused great gifts to the accomplishment of inadequate, and too often unworthy ends. His song breathes to us of sorrow, disappointment, and misanthropy. The poet in whom love should dwell as the great spirit and abiding principle that guides the inspiration of his soul, appears as if looking on his fellow-men as objects of hatred and disgust. And yet it was not so. Fortune had cast his lot in a rank wherein the poet, far less even than the man of science, is able to find his own natural element. Of him it might be said, as our own true poet of nature has sung of the hapless Scottish queen,

"Born all too high for happiness."

Better far for Byron, that he had lingered for life a humble dweller among the stern beauties of dark Loch-na-gar, or even buffeted, like Burns, the harsh fortunes of lowly poverty, and learned to think, amid the privations of the cottage, "that man was made to mourn."

In the case of the Earl of Dundonald, however, we find a very different source of failure from that which we mourn in the noble poet. His was not talents misapplied, but generous aspirations and an altogether unwonted energy and inventive power, which strangely shut him out from the countenance and reward of public patrons, whose favours might have been purchased by dallying in attendance at a minister's levees. From this we may

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learn in a new sense the truth of Solomon's exclamation, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." In every rank of life, man may fulfil his duties to God and to his fellow-men, for it is impossible that the Divine lawgiver should exact from man what he has not enabled him to perform. Yet in the calm seclusion and freedom alike from engrossing desires, and anxious cares, which is afforded in the middle ranks of life, the human mind seems ever to find the most ready sphere for the healthy exercise of its gifts and functions, and from this class it is that learning, and genius, and that worth which most largely promotes the highest interests of mankind, have most frequently sprung. In the ample records of the aristocracy of mind, from which we have selected these varied examples of early genius, some few have sprung from among the great and titled of the earth, more from the despised ranks of poverty and lowly worth, but the great majority have belonged to the middle class, which constitutes in all free nations the influential body of the people.

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"To Watt we owe the obedient ship that ploughs its course through the mighty deep, in defiance of wind and tide."—Page 518.

CHAPTER III.

JAMES WATT.

No one can look upon the beautiful statue of James Watt, in Westminster Abbey—which forms the noblest memorial of the skill of Chantrey's chisel—without being struck with the remarkable evidence of genius and power displayed in that thoughtful countenance. The lofty brow shows the seat of intellect, and the earnest features, which correspond with all the portraits of this eminent discoverer, manifest the workings of that great mind

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which evoked a new power for the service of mankind that is now accomplishing a peaceful revolution of the world.

James Watt was born at Greenock on the 19th of January, 1736. He was a delicate child, and continued through early youth to have to contend with the impediments incidental to a weak constitution, so that his education was, to a great extent, of a domestic character. This, however, is rarely prejudicial to a boy of a thoughtful and studious turn. Young Watt very early gave proof of the possession of faculties of great vigour and compass. "It is said that, when only six years of age, he was discovered solving a geometrical problem upon the hearth with a piece of chalk; and other circumstances related of him justify the remark which is said to have been elicited from a friend on the above occasion, that he was 'no common child.' About 1750, or shortly afterwards, he amused himself by making an electrical machine; and from a curious anecdote related by Arago, it would appear that the grand subject by which he subsequently immortalized himself formed, thus early, matter of contemplation to the young philosopher. The anecdote referred to appears to have been communicated to Arago by a member of Watt's family. It is somewhat differently rendered in different translations, but is, in effect, that his aunt, Mrs. Muirhead, who did not entertain the same opinion as his father of the powers of the boy, upbraided him one evening at the tea-table for what seemed to her to be listless idleness; taking off the lid of the kettle and putting it on again; holding sometimes a cup, and sometimes a silver spoon, over the steam; watching the exit of the steam from the spout; and counting the drops of water into which it became condensed. With the increased light imparted by a knowledge of his subsequent career, the boy pondering before the tea-kettle will, as observed by his enthusiastic French biographer, be viewed as the

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great engineer preluding to the discoveries which were to immortalise him."

To this we may add the interesting account of Lord Brougham :—" He occasionally visited his mother's relations at Glasgow, but never attended any lectures there, or elsewhere. The ardour of his active mind was superior to all restraints which the weakness of his bodily frame could impose. He devoured every kind of learning. Not content with chemistry and natural philosophy, he studied anatomy, and was one day found carrying home for dissection the head of a child that had died of some hidden disorder. His conversation, too, was so rich, so animated, that from the relation of Mrs. Campbell, a female cousin of his, we find it formed the subject of complaints by a lady with whom he resided. She spoke of the sleepless nights which he made her pass by engaging her in some discussion or some detail of facts, or some description of phenomena, till the night was far advanced towards morning, and she found it impossible to tear herself away from his talk, or to sleep after he had thus excited her."

As in the case of many other youths of unwonted powers of mind, considerable difficulty appears to have been felt in fixing on a profession suited to his versatile talents After spending two years with an ingenious mechanic in Glasgow, from whom he learned the rudiments of the art of constructing philosophical instruments—he removed to London, and there devoted himself, for a time, to the higher branches of the same art, being chiefly employed in the construction and adjustment of sextants, compasses, and other nautical instruments. His feeble health, however, speedily compelled him to relinquish his situation, and he returned to Glasgow, with the view of setting up there as an instrument maker; but had he not fortunately obtained an apartment within the University buildings, and the countenance of that learned body, he would have been expelled from that city by the narrow-minded selfish-

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ness of the corporate bodies, as no freeman of the craft. The following remarks of the illustrious biographer of the "Men of Letters and Science in the Reign of George III.," are invaluable as a lesson to all who desire to attain success in any worthy pursuit. Watt early acquired the friendship and co-operation of the professors of the University. "While thus occupied and thus befriended by men of great names, his own reputation increased daily as a successful cultivator of natural science. His workshop became the resort of all zealous students and enlightened inquirers into physical science, and was particularly resorted to by the pupils of the University. Professor Robison tells us, that though regarding himself as a proficient in the mixed mathematics and in experimental philosophy, he was somewhat mortified at finding Watt so greatly his superior in the same favourite departments of study. In truth, it was the ordinary practice to consult him as the oracle upon any difficulty coming in the way of either students or inquirers. His fixed resolution to be deterred by no difficulties was constantly apparent, and one example is given by the Professor. The solution of a problem which occupied Watt and his friends, seemed to require the perusal of Leupold's Theatre of Machines, and as it was written in German, he at once learnt that language in order to consult the book. Another instance of his indomitable perseverance against great difficulties apparently irremovable, though not insuperable, may be added. He had no ear at all for music: not only was he through life wholly insensible to its charms, but he could never distinguish one note from another; yet he undertook the construction of an organ; and the instrument which he made not only had every mechanical merit from the most ingenious contrivances for conducting and regulating the blasts and movements of the machine, but produced the most admirable harmonic results, so as to delight the best performers. He overcame the difficulties which

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lay in his way, partly by the phenomenon of the beats of imperfect consonances, a theory then little understood, and only contained in a work at once very profound and very obscure, Smith's 'Harmonics.'

It only remains to add, that all the reading and all the speculations of Watt were strictly confined to hours which did not interfere with his profession or his trade of an instrument maker. The whole of the day was devoted to his business, only subject to the interruption of the discussions raised by those who frequented his workshop in search of assistance and information. It was late in the evening, or rather in the night, that he prosecuted with zeal and close attention his philosophical studies; for his principle through life was steadily kept in view, and uniformly acted on, never to let anything whatever interfere with business, the transaction of which he regarded as a primary duty to be performed, and entitled, as such, to take precedence of all other pursuits."

A singular and happy chance directed Watt's attention at this time to the steam engine. A model of an early method of applying this power formed a part of the apparatus used to illustrate the lectures of the Professor of natural philosophy. From some defect in its construction, however, it failed in answering its purpose, and Mr. Watt was desired to examine it, and, if possible, to remove its defects. This he speedily did; but the investigation of it not only satisfied him of its being radically defective in principle, for all practical purposes, but led him to make a variety of experiments, the result of which was at length that mighty invention which forms the chief mechanical power now in use throughout the world. In this he was largely aided by Dr. Black's experiments on heat, which have already been described in a previous section of this volume. By that eminent philosopher's discoveries, he was put in possession of the principle which chiefly affected the operations of the power he sought to apply to

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practical purposes, and he was thereby enabled, from the first, to proceed with a clear knowledge of the nature of the operations, and of the cause of the difficulties he had to work out to a satisfactory result. Our space precludes the possibility of entering into a detailed account of the improvements effected by Watt on the practical application of the power of steam, by which he became to all intents and purposes the real inventor of the steam engine. To him we owe the obedient ship that ploughs its course through the mighty deep, in defiance of wind and tide, entering every creek and sheltered bay, and winding through the links of our inland waters, or boldly steering its way across the broad ocean; a new dominion subservient to the will of man. To the same great mind we have to acknowledge the locomotive engine that now sweeps through the broad landscape, bearing swiftly from city to city its long train of passengers and goods, and making time and space altogether insignificant as barriers between the distant cities of the empire, or even the wide kingdoms of Europe.

The same inventive genius was employed to control this giant power, and by means of safety-valve, regulator, and other ingenious expedients, to place it completely under the power of its master.

Many were the disappointments which this great discoverer had to contend with. While conscious of the incalculable value of his invention, he was compelled to see it neglected and useless for many years, while he had altogether to abandon it, and employ himself in the ordinary duties of a civil engineer. When he had succeeded in obtaining a patent, he saw the term of its protection expire without his having reaped any reward from his labour. He received, however, an honourable mark of recognition of its national worth and importance, by obtaining an act of parliament which extended his patent for twenty-five years. The incalculable benefits that

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have resulted from his labours are even now appreciated by comparatively few. By means of his steam-engine hundreds of mines have been worked which were altogether valueless without it, and many have been opened that previously must have defied all the mechanical powers then at the miner's command. Our cotton, silk, and flax mills, our printing-presses, even our breweries and salt-works, and other manufactories for the consumption of the table, as well as our farm-yards and corn-mills, all testify to the genius of this great benefactor of his species, who enriched not his own country alone, but the world, by the works of his mind.

The versatility of Watt's intellectual powers is proved by the important controversy as to the discovery of water, which now engages the attention of some of the most eminent of the scientific writers of Europe, the majority of whom have agreed to give to Watt rather than to Cavendish, the high honour of having been the first to arrive at this important truth, and to show not only that water is not a simple elementary body, but to analyse its component elements, and accurately to define their nature. There is not wanting evidence in favour of Cavendish also, but however the controversy shall terminate, it can in no way detract from the honour and genius of him, who, in the eloquent language inscribed by Lord Brougham on the pedestal of his statue, "directing the force of an original genius, early exercised in philosophic research, to the improvement of the steam-engine, enlarged the resources of his country, increased the power of man, and rose to an eminent place among the illustrious followers of science, and the real benefactors of the world."

Watt's health improved in his latter years, and he retained all his great intellectual faculties unimpaired to the last. A curious proof of his mental activity was shown when he was upwards of seventy years of age. Some incidents

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induced him to question whether his faculties were not beginning to fail; and to test their powers, he set himself to learn the Anglo-Saxon language, which he mastered with such ease as abundantly proved that age had not abated their strength. More practical evidences of this were furnished by him much nearer the close of his long and honourable career. In his eighty-first year he invented his copying machine, by which the most beautiful and elaborate works of the statuary can be reproduced in marble on any scale; a device of great ingenuity, and a most valuable contribution to the arts, affording abundant proof that the genius which bestowed on mankind the invaluable boon of the steam-engine, was even then capable of adding to its wealth by other creations of kindred worth. He died on the 25th of August, 1819, in his eighty-third year, having lived to witness to some extent, and still more to foresee, the vast triumphs which this offspring of his genius is destined to accomplish for mankind.

THE END.

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